ACROSS WIDEST AMERICA

NEWFOUNDLAND TO ALASKA

BY

E. J. DEVINE, S. J.

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ACROSS WIDEST AMERICA

NEWFOUNDLAND TO ALASKA

WITH THE IMPRESSIONS
OF TWO YEARS' SOJOURN
ON THE BERING COAST
PROFUSELY ILLUSTRATED

BY

EDWARD J. DEVINE, S.J.

Nostræ vocationis est
diversa loca peragrare.
—*S. Ignat.*

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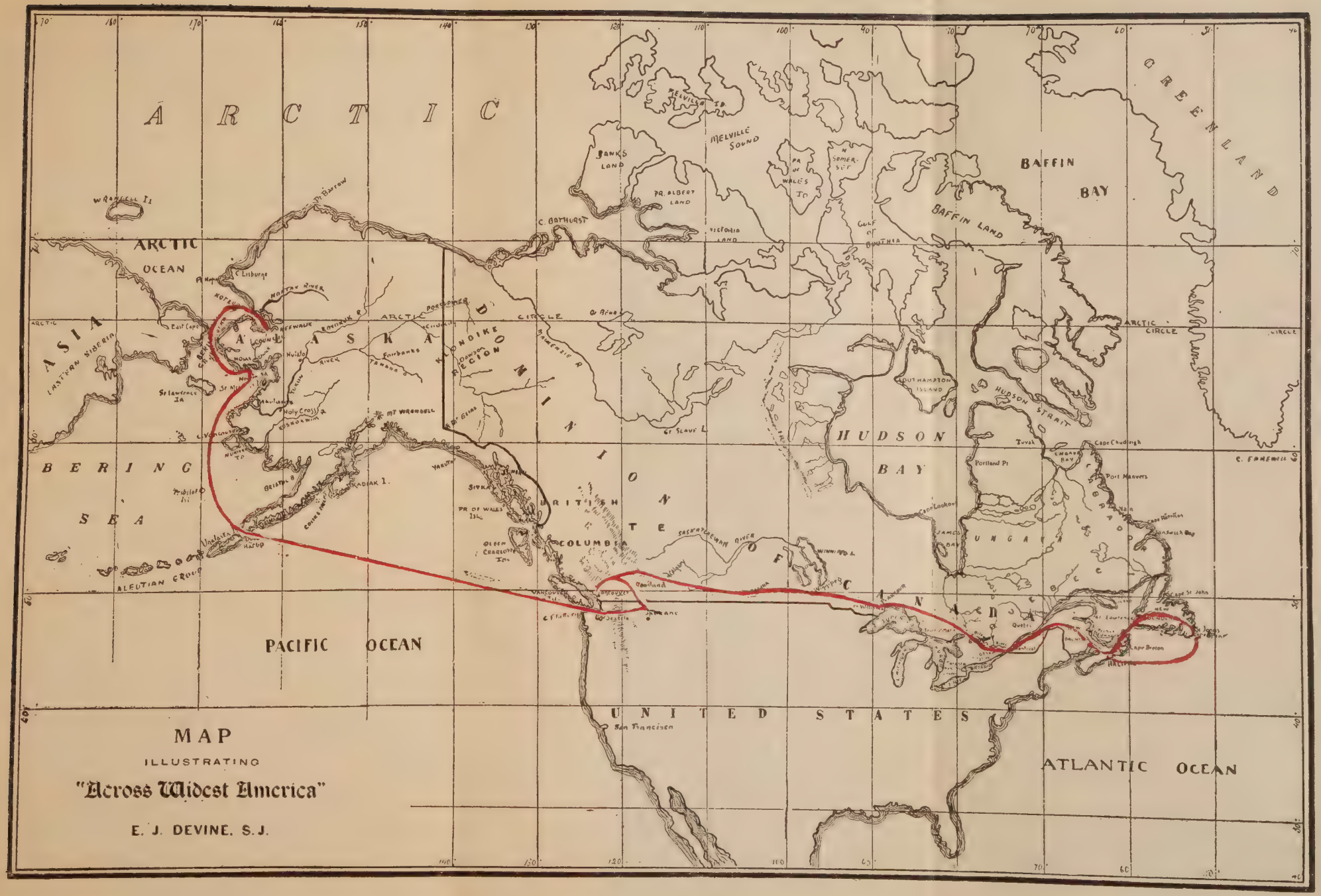
PREFACE

This volume embodies the substance of various articles which appeared in the London "Month" and the "Canadian Messenger." To these some new matter has been added, and the whole has been recast and thrown into a more permanent form. If its pages, on which the author spent some of the long winter nights in his Alaskan cabin, should bring to his readers even a tithe of the pleasure which they afforded him in the writing, their purpose will have been amply served. :: :: ::



MAP

ILLUSTRATING

"Across Widest America"

E. J. DEVINE, S.J.

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ACROSS WIDEST AMERICA

CHAPTER I

Newfoundland—Orders for Alaska—The Journey begins

IN the spring of 1902, I saw Newfoundland for the first time. A visit to England's oldest colony had been for many years no more than cherished dream. To me that large Island lying off the American coast was practically a foreign country; so distant it seemed, and so isolated. And this impression of its aloofness was still vivid when our stout little packet *Glencoe*, bound for Terra Nova, moved down the Halifax harbor and steamed out into the Atlantic. Three days later, however, when we answered the flags on Signal Hill, rounded Cape Spear, the extreme easterly point of the continent, entered the Narrows, and, after threading our way among warships and merchant-men, moored in the lovely, land-locked harbor of St. John's, I felt that my dream of years was about to be realized.

The two massive towers of the great Catholic cathedral, rising high above the city, are the

first objects that attract a traveller's attention. Viewed from the Narrows they stand out boldly, like sentinels keeping watch and ward over the old city, and telling the world beyond that God is worshipped in that remote outpost of America in a temple of proportions worthy of its patron saint, the great Precursor.

St. John's itself is the capital of the Island colony and the chief seat of its commerce. The story of its career as a centre of population is the story of many another centre of small beginnings and long periods of adolescence. It rose from the ashes to which it was reduced in the desastrous fire of 1892; its buildings are consequently modern and substantial. But notwithstanding its up-to-date aspect, there is a quaintness about the city that is peculiarly its own. With its South-side Hill and its enormous heaps of cod-fish, its fresh salt breezes and its unsavory seal oil, its generous hospitality and its insular customs, its picturesque Quidi Vidi Lake and its breakneck streets, its summer heat and its icebergs, St. John's is a city of contrasts.

Two very interesting events took place during my stay which gave me glimpses of colonial life. One was the annual opening of the Legislative

Assembly and the delivery of the speech from the throne. The formalities attending the reception of the Governor of the Island, imposing and dignified as they seemed to me, were carried out with great exactness. Church and State blending so gracefully on that occasion denoted an ideal condition of things by no means common in this age. The second event was the opening of the sealing season; and it was an interesting sight for uninitiated eyes to witness the rush and bustle preparatory to the departure of the sealing fleet. An incident occurred which was not down on the programme, but which lent additional interest to the scenes on the docks. The sealmen went out on strike for higher wages. Three thousand daring, grim-looking Islanders marched up and down the streets, clamoring for better terms for their toil. This was a new event in the life of the city; but the demonstrations were peaceful enough, and, I believe, ended in a compromise.

From what I could learn, the claims of the sealmen were few and reasonable; for the dangers attached to their life at sea are many and acute. Quite a number of them have, in recent years, lost their lives among the ice-floes off the coasts of Labrador and Northern New-

foundland. But dangers do not daunt a "sealer"; the prospects of a good season's hunt keep his courage up; and when March 10th comes, the date fixed by law for the setting out, he is ready to put up with the wretched fare and the uncomfortable berth aboard ship, and to brave the hardships and perils of the hunt, if he can call fifty or sixty dollars his own when the time is due for sharing the profits of the season.

Two months in the active and consoling labor of the ministry in the cathedral on the hill had sped by all too quickly, and I set out on a seven thousand mile journey to the other side of America, orders having come to me to proceed at once to Northwestern Alaska, to work among the miners and Eskimos for two years.

Another dream of childhood was on the eve of accomplishment. The prospect of a journey across the entire continent, with its ever varying scenes of land and water, its thickly settled eastern provinces, its prairies and its lofty mountains; then over the vast expanse of the North Pacific and through the Aleutian Islands, the stepping stones to Asia; then up through the Bering Sea to the Land of the Midnight Sun and midday darkness, forced me to look forward to the

various phases of the long trip with all the emotions of a schoolboy. I was about to cross America at its widest point, to visit the region where the "Northern Lights" rise, the home of the polar bear and the walrus, where the primitive Eskimos dwell, those little stout men of our picture books, clothed in fur, who drive reindeer and poulkehs, and who live under the ice and snow.

Two years' furlough from the fatigues of the ministry, to seek solitude in a mining camp on the shores of the Bering Sea, to live the life of a miner, inhaling meanwhile the air that gives back health and strength; and, what is, perhaps, just as precious, to garner in the experiences of men and things which only travel offers, was a programme generous enough to excite the enthousiasm of even a missionary; and with a light heart, I set out on my journey of seven thousand miles.

The four hundred and fifty miles across Newfoundland from St. John's to Port-aux-Basques, was through a country still quite unknown to the outside world. A new narrow-gauge railway — forerunner of wealth and prosperity — runs from coast to coast through the very heart

of the Island; but with the exception of an occasional settlement along the right of way, the country through which it passes is in its primeval wildness. The interior of Newfoundland is still as wild and primitive as in the years when the Beothuks roamed freely through its forests. Trees and thick shrubbery still clothe its valleys and fringe its streams—streams teeming with speckled finny beauties. The little touches of color put in here and there by Nature's incomparable brush, were so frequent along the line that one wonderingly asks the question why a land so favored, one that has been in the possession of England for over four hundred years, is still so little known.

The answer, however, is evident to anyone who is brave enough to venture around the curves along its coast. Amid vistas of incomparable loveliness, and fiords and coves that make the Island a rival of Norway, Newfoundland is hemmed in with rocks, fierce in their solid massiveness, and laden, every one of them, with memories of ocean tragedies. The wild Atlantic waves lashing it, and the dangers attending the approach to it in ships, tell us eloquently why, up to a few decades ago, this land,

with its forty thousand square miles, was practically as inaccessible as any island in the South Seas.

But the age of the railway builder has come. Modern enterprise is opening up this land pregnant with vast possibilities. Men are at work changing the history of the Island, and perhaps shifting the seat of its commerce. It is only when you approach the Gulf of St. Lawrence, on your way across the country, you appreciate the conviction expressed so openly by many Newfoundlanders, that their west coast is the future granary of the Island colony. There the soil is better, the mineral resources more promising, the seasons more favorable to navigation. When Newfoundland ceases to play with Fate and enters the Canadian Confederation, where she rightfully belongs, the problem of the future of the colony will solve itself. Meanwhile, printer's ink and the advertiser—those heralds of empire—are actively at work. The fragrance of Newfoundland's pine woods, laden with game, and the wealth of its waters, are drawing thither every season sportsmen and hunters. These in turn will be followed by the miner, and the timber cruiser, and the farmer; and the age of prosperity already dawning in Newfoundland, will have set in.

On reaching Port-aux-Basques, I bade adieu to Newfoundland, and stepped into one of the Reid steamers, the *Bruce*, a rapid, comfortable vessel which in less than seven hours landed me in Sydney, Cape Breton, where the Canadian section—three thousand seven hundred miles—of this interesting journey began.

An enterprising globe-trotter, who had been over the ground himself, has suggested that the Canadian Government could do nothing better than to gave every young Canadian, on his twenty-first birthday, a free trip to Vancouver. Nova Scotia, with its vast mineral beds unexplored; New Brunswick, with its farms and forests and waterfalls still undeveloped; Quebec, the home of civil and religious liberty; Ontario, the garden of Canada; and finally, and greater than all, the boundless prairies and mountains of the West to the Pacific Ocean, would pass in turn, like a superb panorama, before the young Canadian's admiring eyes. A journey across the continent, even in a railway train, would reveal the resources of the great Dominion, and stimulate the budding patriotism of those who, a few years hence, will be entrusted with the responsibilities of citizenship. The old saw that flying behind a

locomotive to study a continent is doing things superficially, would have no application in a young Canadian's case; for the Government is always supplying him with rich sources of supplementary knowledge to make for the deficiencies of observation on the trip.

There are obvious reasons why the globe-trotter's very practical suggestion will never be carried out; but the spirit that prompted it was a good one. If you want to get a true idea of the size and wealth of Canada, you must cross it from ocean to ocean.

From Sydney westward the Intercolonial railway carried us over Nova Scotia, through a land of weird beauty, where chains of lakes and arms of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, dimly seen through veils of mist, receded as we passed.

It was to this region of Cape Breton and to the large Island—Prince Edward's—lying to the north of it, that, in the third quarter of the eighteenth century, the chivalrous Laird of Glenaladale, whose memories of Culloden Moor must have been still vivid, brought his colony of Scots for purposes of settlement. Those sturdy Highlanders sailed along the jagged coasts of the New Scotia that recalled the Old, cut their way

through forests and over hills and valleys, counterparts of their native glens, and set to work to till the ground and prosper. Their descendants are still there, thousands of them, distinguishing themselves in the various walks of life.

After a few hours' further run, we crossed the narrow neck of land that separates the Bay of Fundy from Northumberland Strait; we were in New Brunswick. Only a part of this rich Province, with its twenty-eight thousand square miles, is under cultivation. There are still vast primeval forests, the home of the moose, awaiting the brawny arm of the woodman. The abnormal height of the tides in the Bay of Fundy used, in years past, to cause the water to flow over whole sections of the country. But this tide-swept land has been reclaimed by human industry. While our train glided along, miles of earthen dykes could be seen following the curves of the creeks filled with ebbing tide-water, and leaving rich alluvial farms which are to this Canadian Province, an old traveller tells us, "what the carses of Gowrie and Faldkirk are to Scotland, and the warped lands of Lincolnshire are to Eastern England."

The farmers who till those dyked lands, and

who are penetrating the New Brunswick forests still further yearly, are the Acadians, a French race whose history is a tragedy written, not in blood, but in tears. Longfellow's "Evangeline," though meant for fiction, is the true story of the fourteen thousand victims whom the heartless British Governors, between 1755 and 1763, drove from their homes along "the mournful and misty Atlantic." The remnants of those brave Acadians now number one hundred and forty thousand, out the nine hundred thousand who people the Province. They are relatively prosperous, tenacious of their Faith and national traditions, yet trying to forget the tragic dispersion of the eighteenth century. Their homes and villages, hidden away, many of them, among pines and hemlocks, laden with long waving tufts of hoary lichen, give a charm to their settlements hard to be duplicated. Church spires surmounted with glittering crosses, peeped out here and there through the trees as we passed, and offered a picture of quiet and contentment typical of a people whose desire is to be let alone to work out its own destiny.

Night came on while we were speeding along the shore of the Baie des Chaleurs and through the

valley of the Metapedia; the morning after, the Gulf of St. Lawrence was rolling before us. For eight hundred miles we were carried westward along the south bank of that monarch among rivers, the mighty St. Lawrence, through quiet French Canadian villages and farming-scenes, until we saw standing out on the opposite bank the old rock on which Quebec is built. On the summit rests the citadel, once the Gibraltar of America, now a trysting-place for tourists; beside it, the Plains of Abraham whereon the destinies of Canada were decided in 1759. Every square foot of that old French city teems with souvenirs of the religious and political history of the country. There the heroes of the French regime lived and died; thence set out for the unknown West those intrepid missionaries and explorers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who have left their impress on the history of Canada, and blazoned their names on its maps.

A couple of hundred miles further west, we crossed the St. Lawrence, on a bridge of colossal proportions, and stepped out of our coach in Montreal, the metropolis of the north.

It was at Montreal that I completed my preparations for the trip across the continent, a

journey wearying enough for one who was about to cross it for the seventh time. The route that gave the least fatigue and the quickest transit was the one to be selected; and the facilities that came to me, quite unexpectedly, were readily acccepted—nothing less than a berth in a private car. This car was the *Rosemere*, one of those railway coaches set aside for the exclusive personal use of American railway officials, wherein they are gliding almost continually over the country in the interests of their companies.

Ordinary mortals, even in America, do not indulge frequently in luxuries of this nature; but there were strong motives urging me to accept the kind invitation of Superintendent Spencer of the Canadian Pacific railway. He and his party were going direct from Montreal to the Pacific Ocean. And from the *Rosemere's* windows we should have the rare privilege of contemplating, without let or hindrance, the rugged shores of Lake Superior, inspecting a thousand miles of prairie, and, while viewing the green wheatfields of the Northwest, preparing ourselves for the grandeurs of the Rocky Mountains. With these visions in store for us, the *Rosemere* started out on a bright June morning, on its transcontinental journey.

The run for the first few hundred miles west Montreal would be monotonous enough, were it not for the scenery and the historical souvenirs of the Ottawa valley. The builders of the Canadian Pacific railway sought no new route when they decided to bind the continent with their steel. They simply followed, for over three hundred miles, the natural waterstretch that Champlain followed in 1615, that the fur-traders and missionaries followed after him for two hundred and fifty years, on their way to the Great Lakes. This is the route of the proposed Georgian Bay Canal, on which enthusiastic capitalists wish to spend fifteen millions to turn our large inland cities into seaports.

You hardly make a hundred miles up the valley when you catch a first glimpse of the towers of the Canadian parliament buildings, at Ottawa, rising up against the blue sky. After another run of a few miles, you move into the Province of Ontario, over an iron bridge spanning the Chaudiere Falls, where nearly beneath you the whole volume of the Ottawa river rushes downward with a deafening roar between two rocks, and plunges into what some people believe to be a subterranean channel; for it surges

again to the surface farther down the stream. The Chaudiere Falls are the famous *astikoa* of the Algonquins, who, a couple of centuries ago, never passed eastward or westward on their expeditions, warlike or peaceful, without throwing a tribute of tobacco-leaves into the seething waters, to appease the angry genius of the place. This body of water is furnishing motive power for large milling industries in the neighborhood and for one of the most brilliantly electric-lighted cities in the world. Ottawa is a rising city of nearly seventy thousand, very fascinating to visitors, not merely for its site, which is unique, but also for its people, especially during the sessions of Parliament, when the intellect and culture of the Dominion assemble there for a part of the year.

When the present Prime Minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, took up the reins of government, he promised to make Ottawa the home of art and litterature in the North, and the citizens are incessantly reminding him of his promise. The city, modern in every respect, still bears the traces of the military precautions which cost England four million dollars in the early years of the last century, when Colonel By opened independent com-

munications with the St. Lawrence, in anticipation of any unpleasantness that might arise with our southern neighbors. The old Rideau military canal and the Sapper's bridge, the one dividing, the other uniting again, the upper and lower portions of the city, still remain as relics of the stirring times of the first half of the nineteenth century.

Fifty years ago, the pine and hardwood forests of the Ottawa valley were supplying the markets of Europe with timber; but the axe of the modern woodman has changed all that. The forests have disappeared, and little towns like Renfrew, Pembroke, Mattawa, and others, prosperous and growing, have risen up here and there along this fertile valley. Vast clearings, snug homes, spacious barns, greeted us along the way, while the growing fields of grain revealed the secret of the Canadian farmer's prosperity.

The *Rosemere* quitted the Ottawa valley at Mattawa, where the river turns to the north, and after a brief hour's run, began to glide along the shore of Lake Nipissing. Three hours later we entered the nickel and copper region, of which Sudbury is the centre, four hundred and forty miles from Montreal.

THE NARROWS — ENTRANCE TO THE HARBOR
OF ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND

ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND

It was in 1882 that the Canadian Pacific syndicate laid its rails through the Sudbury mining country, and a more uninviting region it would be hard to find. What the Nipissing forests were in times long past, the number and thickness of the ruined trees are still there to attest; the writings of the early missionaries describe, more than once, the magnificence of the forests and hills along the shores of the lakes and rivers of New Ontario. Twice or thrice in the past century, fire carried desolation into the very midst of this country peopled by the Otchipways; and of the dense forests, with their wealth of fur-bearing animals, nothing remains but bared rocks and myriads of branchless stumps and tree-trunks. In the neighborhood of Sudbury, thousands of those charred monuments are still standing to tell the story of their ruin. To make them still more conspicuous, they stand, most of them, on the top and sides of what were once fertile hills and mountains. The forest fires burned the very sod away, leaving the bare rock visible everywhere; and people passing ask, in all sincerity: "What can such a desolate region be good for anyway?" But those barren Sudbury hills reminded the railway engineers of the

old miser who dressed himself in rags, the better to hide the treasure he carried in his pocket.

The existence of native copper and other metals was known to the Otchipways long before any white man set foot on the shores of the great lakes. There are ridges, evidently artificial in construction, on Isle Royale, in Lake Superior, and elsewhere, which are supposed to be relics of aboriginal mining operations. The early Jesuit missionaries, in their writings, speak very frequently of copper in those regions. In the *Relation* of 1659-60, we read that "Lake Superior is enriched in its entire circumference with copper of such excellence that pieces as large as one's fist are found all refined." The missionaries taught the Ottawa tribes how best to obtain and reduce the ore from the copper deposit. An Englishman, Alexander Henry, engaged in trading with the Indians, passed the winter of 1767 on Michipicoten Island. He, also, reported the existence of native copper along the shores of Lake Superior. The following year, Captain Jonathan Carver, in a paper on the subject, predicted that in future times, an advantageous trade would spring up. "The metal," he wrote, "will be conveyed in canoes through the Falls of Ste-Marie, and thence in

larger vessels to the Falls of Niagara. After being carried by land across the portage, it will be easily transported to Quebec."

The captain's forecast that an advantageous trade would spring up came true to the letter; but it can hardly be said that it was not one of those prophecies that come true despite the prophet; for there were no data in 1768, beyond the bare existence of the metal, on which to base such a prediction. If we were to judge of Carver's plans by present standards of transportation and profit, we should find them very primitive indeed. Imagine our modern lake steamship companies carrying ore in canoes down St. Mary's River, and then hauling it across the Niagara portage on its way to Quebec. The world and its methods of doing business have changed since Captain Carver's time.

Nickle mining had certainly not entered into his calculations. It was only in 1883 that those mines began to attract attention. When the engineers were pushing the Canadian Pacific railway through the Sudbury region, what appeared to the navvies to be huge masses of white iron were thrown out of the rock-cuts by dynamite. Assays revealed rich specimens of nickeliferous

pyrrhotite. The news spread abroad and capitalists flocked in. These secured large tracts of land around a future town; a Cleveland company alone buying eighteen thousand acres. Diamond drills went down here and there; veins were located, and shafts sunk, at various points of the district. Hundreds of men were set to work; millions of tons of the ore were brought to the surface, formed into beds of about eight hundred tons each, and roasted to get the sulphur out; then thrown into water-jacket smelters, to flow out again in the forms of matte and slag. This work has now been going on for over twenty years; and experienced eyes were there still, when the *Rosemere* passed, watching the glowing stream of matte running into vessels in the average proportions of fourteen per cent. nickel and twenty-six of copper. Only practised eyes can distinguish between the brilliant colors of the molten, valueless slag and the matte worth a thousand dollars a ton. When the matte cools off, it is crushed and packed into barrels to await final reduction at home or abroad.

The *Rosemere* soon carried us far to the west of the Sudbury mines, and we retired for the night, to escape the monotony of a wilderness,

and to shorten the three hundred and sixty miles to Heron Bay, where the traveller gets his first glimpse of Lake Superior. For many hours we skirted the shores of beautiful lakes, sheets of water of little value to except to the fish that swarm in them, but that would be simply priceless near our eastern towns; we passed through trackless wastes of muskeg and stunted vegetation, utterly unfit for farming purposes, and waiting only for enterprising prospectors to sink drills through coal beds, and, perhaps, through veins of gold quartz.

Travelling in a private car and talking with railway people are privileges not to be despised. While you are flying comfortably in the darkness past semaphores and stations, over bridges and through rock-cuts, and have half a dozen officials giving you the benefit of their rich stores of information, you can learn in a short time a great deal about the railway world and its inner workings. Few railways have shown more enterprise and activity than the one over whose line we were at that moment gliding.

The story of the building of this great Canadian road is the story of railway construction in any country where Nature shows her teeth.

Nor can we recall any line, except perhaps the Trans-Siberian route, where the difficulties of construction were so continuous or so great. Hundreds of miles of trackless wilderness, wrapped in ice and snow in winter, and in summer, intersected with rivers and brawling torrents; ravines blocked with gigantic rocks and boulders, relics of the glacial ages; opposing mountain ranges bristling with tall, ugly, branchless tree-trunks, like monuments raised to desolation: these were the every-day scenes that met the eyes of the pioneer surveying parties. In their work of tracing lines, and deciding on the route the future railway was to take, those hardy men forced their way through valleys covered with a well-nigh impenetrable growth of underwood and muskeg, and, with incredible hardships, scaled mountains of bare solid rock, which ran sheer out into the lake and receded inward for miles, growing higher as they receded. I learned on the *Rosemere* that the early engineers and chain-bearers, during their work along the north shore of Lake Superior, had many a time to climb those worse than Alpine hill-sides with ropes and alpenstocks, in order to make some progress in their work. Shut out from all traces

of human habitation, and lost in the shrubbery and broken rocks, they had frequently to find their bearings by means of the sextant. At nightfall, they pitched their tents on the banks of streams, or under mountain ledges, and surrounded themselves with watch-fires to keep the wolves at bay, or to protect themselves against the chilling night air that rolled in from the lakes.

Once the direction of the line had been determined and marked out with grading pickets, the surveyors' work was done; they pushed on, and army of workmen followed in their wake. While squads of navvies, known as bush-gangs, set to work felling trees and clearing away obstructions, rock-gangs, equipped with drills and dynamite, attacked million-ton monoliths, and after untold labor and danger, and not a few accidents, tunnelled them through and through or rent them asunder. Other gangs, with pick and shovel, ploughed up the soft muskeg, and raised the level of the line. Others laid down the wooden cross-ties and spiked on them the heavy steel rails. And thus the line lengthened out day by day, and the army of builders kept moving westward, leaving behind them here and there, along the freshly-laid track, little mounds of

earth covering the bones of poor nameless comrades, the victims of premature dynamite explosions or falling rocks.

There were forty thousand of those men employed during the construction of the Canadian Pacific railway, and stern discipline had to be maintained in order to prevent quarrelling and sedition among such a motley gathering. Moral restraint was brought to bear on the workmen, the missionary being a necessary adjunct of this efficient railway organization. Men of tact and zeal, like Father Baxter and Father Lacombe, followed the construction camps into the wilderness, shared the food and the isolation of the workmen, and exercised an influence over them that was loyally recognized by the builders of the road. "The Jesuit and the Oblate Fathers," wrote Sir Thomas Shaughnessy, a few years ago, "were important factors in the maintenance of the good order which prevailed among the forty thousand men who were employed on the construction of this railway."

One of the problems that confronted the builders, as they receded from civilization, was the task of supplying the physical wants of those thousands of navvies. The foresight of the com-

pany and the contractors was equal to the occasion. No expense was spared to prevent famine or even dearth of supplies. Waggon ways, technically known as "tote-roads," followed the line hard by, and at different points branched off to the lakes. In some instances, the cost of building these purely temporary supply roads was enormous; one of them from the main line to Lake Superior costing over eighty thousand dollars. Over this and similar roads, supplies were brought for man and beast; and the work of construction from Lake Nipissing to Thunder Bay went along rapidly, more rapidly, in fact, than even the most sanguine of the promoters would have dared to anticipate. Boarding cars, railway supplies, etc., changed their base every second or third day; so that the progress of the dump-builders and track-layers was like the advance of an army. The feat of carrying a road through the six hundred miles of wilderness, once abandoned as impracticable, soon became an accomplished fact. The young company, with incredible energy and regardless of cost, was determined to reach the fertile prairies as soon as possible, and refused to compromise for any waterstretch route. And as the *Rosemere* passed

between perpendicular walls of granite, through tunnels of the same material, along the edges of cliffs, and over trestles and bridges perched in mid-air, we could not help paying a passing tribute to the combined power of will and money. When we retired to bed that night, it was to dream of coves and culverts, steel rails and road beds, and the thousand other things about which the uninitiated globe-trotter very rarely bothers himself.

In the early morning, a few Otchipway wigwams were seen in the clumps of cedars near the stations. The Indians themselves were on the platforms waiting to see the *Rosemere* pass. There are still a few reserves in that part of Ontario; and the Canadian Pacific authorities had the good taste to retain many of the soft-sounding old Otchipway names for their stations, such as Metagama, Biscotasing, Nemegosenda, Pogomasing, Missanabie, etc.

The last-named station is on the Michipicoten river, where the fur-traders leave the train for Hudson's Bay and the North. Long before the railway crossed the Michipicoten, this river was a favorite route of the fur company. Sir George Simpson, the old fur governor, passed up and

down through those silent forests for many years, with his Indians and French Canadian oarsmen, on his way to the various northern posts of the Hudson's Bay Company. The railway people did a great deal to deprive the Algoma and Nipissing districts of their primitive seclusion: it would be too much to say that the fur company ever thanked them for it.

CHAPTER II

Towards the West—Manitoba and its Wheat-fields

IT was shortly after noon of the second day that we got our first glimpse of Lake Superior, eight hundred miles west of Montreal, and began to hear the ceaseless roar of the waves above the noise of the engine. For two hundred miles we followed the rugged north shore of this greatest of inland seas, its green waters at times almost dashing against the *Rosemere's* wheels. It is here that the seclusion of a private car is enjoyed. You have the whole lake and its shores to yourself; nor are you boxed up with fifty others, just as eager to see the sights as you are. After a trip seated on the pilot of an engine, or up in the cupola of a freight train, experiences that have been mine more than once along the shores of Lake Superior and in the Rocky Mountains, there are not many things in this world more inviting than flying westward on the rear platform of an official railway coach. We continued our way through tunnels of solid rock, and across coves and valleys, on slender skeleton trestles during the rest of the day. At

night-fall we reached Port Arthur and Fort William. I had completed two thousand five hundred miles of my long journey.

We were on the shores of Thunder Bay. In the distance, eighteen miles away, the night was settling down on the hazy form of Thunder Cape, the Sleeping Giant of the Otchipways. A passage five miles wide, between the cape and the mainland, opens the way out again to the waters of Lake Superior, through which, on clear days, may be seen the hills on Isle Royale, in Minnesota, forty-five miles away.

There is an islet in the lake, just under the shadow of Thunder Cape, that deserves a more than passing mention. For centuries it lay there, a small rock, with a surface measuring hardly eighty feet square. When the wind blew away from the shore, the rock appeared a few feet above the water; when the waves were at rest, the rock was completely submerged. Tradition has it that the hidden wealth of Silver Islet was known to the Otchipways, who drew large quantities of the metal from it for their own use. It was only in the sixties that John Morgan, a prominent explorer in that region, gathered samples of the ore, and had them assayed. In

1864, the Montreal Mining Company sent men to work on the narrow rock; but the result was a failure. The slightest movement of the waters flooded the shaft; and the prospects of success were so slim, that the work was abandoned.

The islet was then sold to Colonel Sibley, of Detroit, who sent a specialist, Captain Frew, to superintend a new effort at mining for the precious metal. A sixty-thousand dollar coffer-dam, built by him around the protruding rock, was swept away by the waves of the lake; but a second one, stronger than the first, was successfully laid. Notwithstanding this operation, the water continued to flow into the mine; and the Sibley company could say that they had the upperhand of the waves only when they had landed thousands of tons of waste rock to strengthen the dam. I give these details to show the trouble the owners had at the start; but their enterprise and perseverance were magnificently rewarded.

Mining was not begun in earnest until 1878-9, when the output of Silver Islet ore created a great sensation. No such ore had ever been taken from the bowels of the earth. The pure metal was found running in veins

through the rock, and could be had from the quartz by merely crushing it with a hammer. I have handled ore taken from that islet, when the quartz fell readily from the hand, leaving the metal holding itself together in silver branches. The mine was worked in a series of pockets; and after the ore had been passed through the smelter, it yielded from one thousand to seven thousand dollars a ton.

The fame of those silver veins spread far and wide; Silver Islet stock went up from zero to two hundred dollars a share. One of the richest lodes was struck in the spring of 1878, and was successfully worked for months. In one week, in the September of that year, the silver yield was forty-three thousand dollars; in the week ending October 5th, seventy-three thousand dollars; October 12th, sixty-seven thousand dollars; October 19th, one hundred and three thousand dollars; October 26th, eighty thousand dollars; all of which was shipped as picked ore, and worth from fourteen hundred dollars to seven thousand dollars a ton. In one famous shipment, ten thousand dollars' worth of the pure metal was obtained from two barrels of Silver Islet ore.

Mining under these conditions was so satisfactory that the work progressed rapidly beneath the lake. But the whole enterprise came to a sudden and inglorious end in 1883. The coal supply gave out in the autumn; the pumps ceased working; and the mine was flooded in a short time. This proved to be an insuperable obstacle; Silver Islet had to be abandoned. The Crown Lands and Mines agent, to whom I am indebted for many of these details, told me that when the water came rushing in, the silver in actual sight was estimated at two hundred thousand dollars. It is still there waiting for some one to instal machinery powerful enough to pump the water out.

Prospectors set about looking for new beds of silver, and located several in the neighborhood of Port Arthur. The Rabbit, Beaver, Badger, Gopher, and others, proved to be rich pockets. They were yielding a great quantity of the metal, and were giving employment to a large number of workmen, when the lowering of values in the world's silver markets, a few years ago, made silver mining unprofitable, and work in the Thunder Bay district ceased definitely. This was a serious set-back to the rising town

A NEWFOUNDLAND LANDSCAPE

of Port Arthur, as it was the ruin of the farmers in the neighboring townships.

There are few places in America more prettily situated than Port Arthur. It is built on a series of plateaus arising from Thunder Bay, the whole expanse of which may be seen from any front window in the town. Port Arthur had sweet hopes and vain imaginings in the early days of its settlement. It dates back to the years 1868 and 1870, when Dawson was building his road to the Selkirk settlement, on Red River, and when Lord Wolesley and his soldiers were on their way to Fort Garry to quell the first Riel uprising. The silver excitement, which gave it prominence in those early years, was just dying out when the building of the Canadian Pacific railway and various Northwest colonization schemes again brightened its prospects. But its citizens did not grasp their opportunities. The extortionate prices of a few short-sighted land speculators clashed with the business instincts of the railway builders—those men who make and unmake towns as well as nations. Sir William Van Horne pulled up stakes one day and planted them at Fort William, five miles away. A rival town began to rise under the

shadow of Mount Mackay; and Port Arthur, in its struggle for life, was thrown back at least twenty years.

Fort William possesses none of the scenic charms of its rival. It is, in fact, nothing more than a common, every-day railway terminus, with gigantic grain elevators, hideous to the eye, and miles of side-tracks running along the Kaministiquia River. It was evidently the pocket, not the picturesque, that took the railway company to Fort William. But for the antiquarian the site has a more than passing historical interest. The banks of the Kaministiquia, or Caministogaya, were the scenes of many exploits done by Indians and fur-traders in the years gone by. When Greylonson de la Tourette, brother of Daniel du Lhut, built his trading post at Lake Nepigon, in 1683, hardy bush-ranger that he was, he must have continued his explorations sixty miles westward along the north shore of Lake Superior, till he reached the Kaministiquia. In 1717, the French government gave Sieur de la Noue trading privileges at the same spot. So that the fort at the mouth of the river had a reputation among the fur-traders long before William McGillivray gave his name to it in 1803.

The brilliant epoch of its history began with the establishment of the North-West Fur Company. Fort William was the principal factory of that powerful organization, during the years of its rivalry with the Hudson's Bay Company; and even after the amalgamation of the two companies, in 1821, the old fort was governed with regal splendor. No less than three thousand traders, trappers, and their families, used to assemble during the bartering season on the banks of the Kaministiquia. Washington Irving and Ballantyne have left us, in their works, pen-pictures of Fort William during the reign of the lordly Nor'-Westers. Irving never saw the place, and he drew largely on his imagination for facts; but traditions of the glory and the splendor that once held sway are still preserved among the Otchipways in the Jesuit mission across the river. When the railway people took possession of that historic ground, they covered it with coal-docks and freight-sheds; they dredged the little river out, and made Fort William the terminus of Northwest grain transportation. Other railway and steamship companies have since established themselves along the banks of the Kaministiquia; and the bark canoes of the aborigines which for-

merly glided so lightly over its surface, have given way definitely to the great iron vessels of the lake service.

The Kaministiquia is the first link of a long water-chain stretching from Lake Superior, up through Dog Lake, Rainy River, Lake of the Woods, Winnipeg River, Lake Winnipeg and Red River to Fort Garry, at the mouth of the Assiniboine, a distance of six hundred and forty-seven miles. Notwithstanding its two hundred and seventy miles of currents and rapids, and its fifty portages, it was navigable with canoes and north-boats. This was one of the water-paths long famous as the Nor'-West route, used by the Hudson's Bay and North-West Companies. It was over this route that LaVerendrye made his way, in 1732, to the then unknown western prairies. Lord Selkirk and his Scotch settlers travelled over it several times, in the begining of the last century, in their heroic attempts to found a colony at Red River, attempts which were frustrated in every way by the heartless fur companies. Forty years ago, expeditions were sent by the Canadian government to report on the practicability of opening up a highway from the great lakes to the prairies; but the Canadian

Pacific company came on the scene twenty years later, and solved the difficulty; at the same time shortening the distance to Winnipeg by over two hundred miles.

The run from Fort William to Winnipeg is four hundred and twenty-six miles, through a vast lone land, mostly flat and wooded, and covered here and there with large tracts of muskeg. The whole country is drained by small lakes and by the streams forming the water-chain mentioned a moment ago, whose borders are thick-set with millions of trees waiting to be felled and floated down to Lake Superior, thence to eastern pulp-mills. The *Rosemere* crossed several rivers and ran along lakes large and small. Six miles to the left of us, hidden away in a forest, is Niagara's only rival, the Kakebeka falls. The Kaministiquia River had been, for centuries, tumbling down a mountain-side, its giant power running to waste, and awaiting only capital and energy to be chained to the service of man. These two indispensible elements of modern enterterprise have at last been found. At Kenora, we caught a glimpse of the incomparable Lake of the Woods, filled with islands, the summer homes of Winnipeg. The trip to the Red River was made

in fifteen hours, when we left Ontario and entered Manitoba, where the really novel features of this long journey were to begin.

Winnipeg is the heart city of the Dominion, but its history is so well known, its marvellous growth and prosperity have been so often written about, that it hardly comes within the scope of these pages to give it more than a passing mention. Suffice it to say that what was nothing but Fort Garry, an old Hudson's Bay fort out in borderland, a few years ago, is now a bustling city of eighty to ninety thousand people, with a university, parliament buildings, daily papers, trolley-cars, railroads, and all the other appurtenances of modern civilization.

It was in Winnipeg that we got the news of King Edward's illness, and the postponement of the coronation ceremonies. Hundreds of people struggled about the bulletin-boards, anxious to read the latest despatches, as they were posted up, and wondering what on earth perityphlitis was.

But the news that came home vividly to me was a despatch from Vancouver, reporting the loss of two Alaskan steamships, the *Portland* and the *Jeanie*. Those vessels were bound from

Seattle to Nome, laden with passengers and freight, and when last seen were drifting in the ice up through Bering Strait into the Arctic Ocean. If they had had the misfortune to get crushed in the ice-floes, it was already all over with them, and another ocean tragedy would have to be recorded. The same day, information came by wire that a third Alaskan steamer, the *Senator*, having on board four Sisters of Providence from Montreal, was quarantined for small-pox, somewhere in the Bering Sea.

The *Rosemere* stayed only a few hours in Winnipeg; long enough, however, to enable me to visit the old town of St. Boniface, with its cathedral, of whose bells Whittier sang, and to renew acquaintance with the Fathers of the Jesuit college there. It was a pleasure to witness the vast strides this latter institution is making towards prosperity. It is, even now, one of the chief intellectual centres of the Northwest, with a great future evidently before it. The Jesuit Fathers have not failed to realize this. They are taking time by the forelock, and are enlarging their building to double its present size, in order to meet the demands of the students whose number is increasing every year.

Though the city itself cuts a sorry figure beside its sister-city across the river, I know of few colleges more pleasantly situated than that of St. Boniface. It is cosily nestled away in a little forest, which almost completely hides the building from the avenue. The trees were casting their deepest shadows when I made my visit there, at the end of June; I had hardily entered the gates when I realized that I was far from the madding crowd and safe in the peaceful atmosphere which surrounds a home of education and refinement. The students had just gone away for their mid-summer holidays; and I felt that the peacefulness of the hours I spent at St. Boniface was intensified by the absence of a few hundred playful young Westerners. Work and play, however, are happily blended in that home of learning. Every year, notwithstanding their numerical inferiority, the students carry off far more than their proportionate share of honors and prize-money, in the examinations of the University of Manitoba. This very gratifying success evidently depends upon the thorough system of training the students of St. Boniface receive. I saw some familiar faces there, notably Fathers Blain, Drummond, and others;

devoted men, who have been for years giving their time and energies to the cause of Catholic higher education in the Northwest.

It was growing dark when we moved out towards the West and the wheat-fields. The *Rosemere* had hardly quitted the borders of the Red River when the horizon began to widen out before us; we felt that we were really on the prairies. It was too early in the season to see Manitoba at its best; the monotony of the prairies in June was positively oppressive. Not a tree as far as the eye could see; nothing but the tiny green blades thickly covering the wheat-fields, which, two or three months later, would ripen into an ocean of golden grain, and wave to and fro under the gentle pressure of the evening breeze. The setting sun gave its brilliant hues to this vast cyclorama, and we stood on the rear platform of the *Rosemere*, until the darkness sent us back to our berths, enraptured at a sight which a few of the passengers had never seen before. During the long night we sped through the Manitoba wheat-fields, over the sites of future prosperous towns and cities.

We were up bright and early next morning to renew acquaintance with the boundless horizon,

a couple of hundred miles west of Brandon. During that whole day, the fourth out from Montreal, we flew through green and growing fields of grain. We were told that if we desired to get a fair idea of the vastness of the wheat region, we should have to travel for weeks on both sides the track. The *Rosemere's* party declined to act on this suggestion, however. We were satisfied with the information, freely given to us, that many millions of acres were under cultivation, and that the prospects for an abundant harvest were brilliant. Those prairies have evidently a wonderful future before them. If we consider the results already obtained, we cannot but find it strange that starving populations will persist in staying in the large towns of the Old and the New World, to live and suffer and die, while there are thousands of square miles of fertile soil out in the Canadian Northwest, waiting to give them a maximum of profit for a minimum of labor.

We were now three thousand five hundred miles from Cape Spear, Newfoundland, and two-thirds of the way across the Dominion. Here and there bits of uncultivated prairie began to show themselves, and told us that we were near-

ing the boundaries of the wheat-growing region. Every year those boundaries are receding further westward, thousands of acres of new land being put under cultivation; but there are immense plains in the West still, waiting for colonists to try their fortunes. The great Regina plain was there before us, level as a restful ocean, extending out to the horizon on every side, with not a hillock or tree to destroy the uniformity. You pass through this vastness for hours together, watching for some object to attract your attention, a gopher or a prairie-dog, till sheer fatigue drives you aft to the smoking-room or the sleeper, where, with closed eyes, you sit and live with your own thoughts, or, sad alternative, listen to the chattering of your fellow-men.

The combined observation and smoking extension, at the rear-end of Canadian Pacific railway sleeping coaches, is the one welcome refuge of weary transcontinental travellers. It is there that world-ramblers, commercial agents and farmers meet after meals, or in the prairie twilight, smoke cigars, and recall their experiences, wise and otherwise, gained in various parts of the world. The value of "No. 1 Hard" is an absorbing topic with the farmers; commercial tra-

vellers discuss the Canadian tariff; while occasionally some planet-circler, or other, chimes in and changes the subject to Japanese chrysanthemums, or arbitration treaties.

After a travelling experience of over a hundred thousand miles on this railway, I have remarked that religious controversy is left quite alone, perhaps because, on the World's Highway to the Orient, you hardly ever know whose toes you may trample on, or whether you are talking to a Buddhist, or a Christian. One only attempt was ever made to draw me into controversy. It happened a couple of years ago in British Columbia, when I was indulging in an interesting talk with a timber-merchant of that Province. He was describing the great Douglas firs and the giant cedars, and the manufacture of red-cedar shingles, when a tall, thin individual across the aisle stretched his neck out and tried to catch bits of our conversation. Without success, however; he evidently thought we were discussing dogma; for, much to our surprise, his shrill voice piped into my ear: "Don't your sect adore the Virgin?"

On one of my long trips, some years ago, just before the Sino-Japanese unpleasantness began,

I got into a rather lengthy conversation with a young Japanese officer, who had been studying the science of war in Germany, and who was going home, by order of his government, to give the Flowery Kingdom the benefit of his knowledge. The young man spoke French fluently, and was anxious to learn from me the Christian system —as he called it—of saving the souls of men. He admired the way things dovetailed in so nicely with us; but he did not think Christian missionaries were doing enough to popularize the system in Japan. With him it was like introducing a new method of book-keeping; and he spoke like one who cared little for Shintoism. As a wind-up to our interview, I lunched with him in the dining-car, where he spoiled the waiters with his princely tipping. Japanese and Chinese are continually going and coming over that line together, but there is nothing in common, socially, between the races as we meet them there. The former are mostly students and wealthy merchants; while the Chinese, if we except rare magnates like Li Hung Chang and Kang Yu Wei, are the dregs of Canton and the neighboring districts, on their way in bond to the West Indian sugar plantations, carrying with

them the irrepressible *yang yin tong*, and permeating the coaches with the fumes of their opium.

When politics and the wheat-crops become exhausted topics, the transcontinental traveller discusses the latest authors, — anything to make the time fly. Killing time is, indeed, one's chief crime on the way across the Canadian prairies ; yet it is lamentable to see how easily one becomes a past-master in the art. People, after all, cannot be forever talking, and some, for the sake of appearances, fall fast asleep; others apply matches to fresh Havanas; others bury themselves in that modern labyrinth, the railway time-table. They work like galley-slaves to find the station where they changed engines last ; where they are at present; where they will be after the night's run. It is an easy enough task to find the names of stations on the tables; but it is when you start out to decipher the time of day that you reach the brink of despair. All American roads sin more or less in their time-tables. Day and night with them are all one, although some roads help you to distinguish the afternoon hours by using darker figures.

Sir William Van Horne, a former president of Canadian Pacific, is responsible for a feature is his yellow folders that simplifies matters greatly. In 1886, he introduced the twenty-four hour system, counting the hours of the day from midnight to midnight. The advantages of this system for railway employees are evident, and for ordinary travellers as well, when once they get used to it; but it is the despair of the uninitiated globe-trotter. He feels a chill running through him when he hears the waiter shouting through the train: "Dinner will be ready at 18 K." And he is ready to jump out of the window of the smoking car, when the colored porter comes, grinning through his ivory molars, and whispers to him that it is 23 o'clock, a gentle hint to retire for the night.

In those long journeys across America, there is a strong tinge of the "happy family" about us, just as on shipboard. But I could see that things are different in private cars. If you have not all the sources of distraction and time-killing that are to be found in the coaches between you and the locomotive, there are the other advantages of privacy that thoroughly make up for them. In the *Rosemere*, for instance, you are not

the cynosure of every eye if you yawn; if you are a bit odd, you may indulge in your whims to your heart's content, without hearing people remark, and sometimes very audibly, too: "What an old bear that man in the corner is!"

SCENE ON THE CANADIAN PRAIRIES

VISTA IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

CHAPTER III

The Western Prairies — Cattle and Cowboys.

WE were behind the scheduled time when approaching Regina, and the driver made a spurt to get us in on the minute. "Pulling up time," is what the trainmen call it, a harder task than impatient and fuming travellers dream of, especially when trains are going at the rate of fifty or sixty miles an hour. Happily, our trainmen had not been trying to cross the prairies so rapidly as that, and the half-hour lost at Broadview was soon gained on a level stretch.

Regina, the former capital of the Northwest Territories, is a small town planted and growing in the middle of the plain. While the *Rosemere* was standing at the station, a troop of red-coated horsemen came cantering over from the barracks, some distance away. They were members of the Northwest Mounted Police, a semi-military force organized, in 1873, by Act of Parliament, for the preservation of order in the Territories. Their headquarters are at Regina, and the whole force is seven hundred strong. The work that is yearly done by the Mounted Police can hardly be realized by any one un-

familiar with the enormous extent of territory that they have to guard. The men patrol systematically the international frontier from Emerson to the Rocky Mountains, a distance of eight hundred miles, keeping down raiding, cattle-stealing, and smuggling, as well as protecting peaceable settlers along the border. They see that the Indians do not leave their reserves; they maintain the ordinance against starting fires on the prairies; they have immediate charge of the cattle-quarantine on the frontier; they enforce Canadian laws and regulations in the North; they patrol the Yukon Territory; they are, in short, responsible for the preservation of law and order over an area of more than three hundred thousand square miles; and, as a matter of fact, over fifteen hundred thousand square miles are annually patrolled by the force in the discharge of their duty. A mounted policeman, in his brilliant uniform, puts as much awe into the heart of an Indian, or an outlaw, as would a personal powwow with His Britannic Majesty himself.

Along the route between Regina and Calgary, we saw, at some of the stations, policemen and Indians, the latter admirable specimens of the Blackfoot tribe, tall and straight, dressed in

blankets and buckskin leggings. They strutted along the platforms like old Romans in their togas, utterly indifferent to the staring eyes of palefaced eastern strangers. I think it was at Swift Current, or at one of the neighboring stations, that I saw a Blackfoot native, over six feet high, covered with his many-colored blanket, and with a dozen or so of brass rings hanging from his ears. He was selling polished buffalo-horns, when one of our passengers approached him to buy a pair. The Indian put his price; the passenger offered less; the Indian assumed an air of injured dignity, threw his horns over his shoulder, and sidled off, in a way that simply disconcerted the would-be purchaser. The latter then offered the Indian the full price, but he absolutely declined further negociations.

Calgary is also a prairie town, rapidly advancing in population, and growing in importance as a railway centre. A branch of the Canadian Pacific runs through Calgary from Macleod to Edmonton. During the building of this branch, which was long before the excitement of the Yukon goldfields, an arm-chair visionary, writing in an American periodical, conjured up an Alaska-Siberian railway scheme.

It may sound extravagant, he maintained, to mention an all-rail American route through Eurasia; but who knows what the present century may accomplish? When traffic warrants the expenditure, rails will be laid through the Athabasca region to the Arctic circle, and beyond. The great Russian road across Siberia will offer an all-rail route from Paris to the Pacific Ocean. The approach of the trans-Siberian road to the coast of the Pacific, will undoubtedly stimulate twentieth-century magnates to lay steel through Alaska. The engineering difficulties are great, but are they insurmountable? Bering Strait could be crossed by some powerful system of train-ferriage. We have here mapped out for us a railway route from New York to Paris, one that would throw Jules Verne's calculations of an Around-the-World trip into the shade. A scientific journal estimates that the time from New York to the Pacific coast would be five days; six to Bering Strait; fourteen from the Strait to London; six from London to New York. So that Mr. Phineas Fogg would not have the slightest difficulty in circling the globe in thirty-one days. This is the substance of the visionary's scheme; it sounds plausible enough, and might carry conviction

until one has seen and studied the climatic conditions of Alaska and the Bering Strait.

It was in the neighborhood of Calgary, and west of it, that the frequent buffalo-trails, still deep in the surface of the plains, leading to ponds and streams, recalled the original possessors of the soil. There is no more curious—I was going to say, pathetic—page in the history of the West than the Passing of the Bison. An old report, the only one I happened to lay hands on, from the pen of Henry Youle Hind, who crossed the plains between 1857 and 1859, gives some reliable data as to the number of buffaloes slaughtered yearly in British territory alone. He estimates that about one hundred and forty-five thousand were killed by the Hudson's Bay Company between the years 1844 and 1859, the period when that company began to traffic to any great extent in robes. In 1855, twenty thousand robes and skins were received at York Factory, on Hudson's Bay, for exportation to Europe ; which, making allowances, would give about twenty-five thousand slaughtered the previous year. On the American side, the traffic was pursued on similar lines. Thirty years ago, four or five million buffaloes roamed over the

American plains. The building of the various transcontinental lines divided the animals into herds, which made them easier of access. The work of final extermination then began; and the rapacity displayed in the greed for hides is perhaps unparalleled even among African ivory-hunters. All that remain of the lord of the prairies are the water-trails, and the heaps of bones bleached and gathered in beside the prairie-stations, awaiting shipment to eastern sugar refineries.

The disappearance of the buffalo marked the advent of the ranchman and the cowboy, both representatives of an industry that has sprung up in recent years. Several members of the *Rosemere* party were looking forward, with not a little trepidation, to the sight of cowboys, in fringed, deer-skin breeches, weighed down with ammunition and Winchesters, hiding their bronzed faces under broad-brimmed hats, and lazily lounging on their bronchos, in the midst of their herds. My own expectations were, perhaps, more eager than the others' ; for I recalled the first cowboy I had met, a couple of years before at Schreiber, on Lake Superior. He was a Blackfoot half-breed, who had charge of a car-load of bronchos

on their way to Montreal. When the car entered the Schreiber cattle-yard, the prairie stranger was dressed in a perfectly normal fashion. He had such a splendid chance, there and then, to show himself off in colors before us, and did not do it, that I could not help admiring his good sense. But the delay in Schreiber was two hours, and the temptation was too great. An hour later, he was done up in paints, and blankets, and ear-rings; while the mere sight of his face was enough to send a chill down your spinal column.

The *Rosemere's* party was doomed to disappointment; the cowboys we saw were dressed like ordinary mortals. But we could not help admiring their dexterous manœuvring with their bronchos. Theirs is a dangerous occupation, and they fairly live on horseback; for they know that goring and certain death await them if they venture on foot among the wild prairie cattle. Thousands of long, sharp horns are ever ready to be driven in between the ribs of a luckless cowboy, and I learned that, notwithstanding the precautions that are taken, such accidents occasionally happen. Before this standing danger, as well as for other reasons, it is a

problem why ranchers do not consult their own and their employees' interests and dishorn cattle while they are still calves. The operation is only a slight one, and experience has shown that where this custom of dishorning prevails on American ranches, less damage is done to hides, cattle fatten more rapidly, are more docile, are mastered more easily, and their shipment to seaboard on the stock-cars is very much more readily done than with horned cattle.

During the fattening season, ranchers and cowboys move with their herds hundreds of miles in every direction, when thousands and tens of thousands of cattle belonging to various ranches may be seen browsing together in utter promiscuity, the owner's private mark burnt into their hides being relied on for their identification. These marks form what a recent writer calls the heraldry of the plains; and when the fattening season is ended, and the time for the "round-up" and shipment eastward to Europe arrives, they make it an easy task to single out the property of the various owners. It is precisely during the "round up," that the cowboys show their marvellous skill; it is then that the traditional red-rag is frequently brought into play. Generally, the

task of corralling cattle, prior to shipment, is simple enough. But sometimes the herds grow uneasy and agitated, and appear jealous of their liberty.

One of the prettiest movements on the plains, rarely seen now, is what is known as "balking a stampede." Thousands of cattle, as if conscious of the fate that awaits them, and as if to protest against their forced trip to seaboard, gallop over the prairies in various directions, coming together, time and again, without order or design. Presently, an old bullock, wiser than the rest, whose wide-spread horns had often made the prairie dust fly, and laid bare the ribs of many a rival, comes out from the middle of the herd, raises his proud head, sniffs the air, places himself like a chief at the front of the army, and starts off at full gallop. Hundreds, sometimes thousands, follow the leader, quite unconscious of any destination, having a world of prairie before them, with no reason for stopping till they drop, as many of them do, or till the Rocky Mountains, or the Arctic snows, bar their passage. When they are well under way, a daring cowboy drives his spur into the flank of his fleet-footed broncho, and flies like the wind in the direction of the cattle. Gaining slowly on the

old chief, he flaunts a red flag before his eyes, attracts his attention, and then usurps the leadership himself. Describing an immense curve, sometimes enclosing miles, the better to hide his plan, he draws the whole army galloping after him to the corral, where they are lodged, while waiting to be divided up according to their owners' brands. One of the practices cattlemen have to contend against is "re-branding." Dishonest ranchmen and traders find nothing easier than to augment the number of their stock by catching a calf already branded, and adding a dash or a dot to the owner's mark; it is so easy to make a Q out of an O, or a T out of an I. This is frequently done, I was told; but on the plains cattle-stealing is looked upon as a very infamous crime in the cowboy's Decalogue; and those who want to engage in it and live, must take their precautions.

The *Rosemere* had been out from Winnipeg already thirty-three hours, so that even the ranches were growing monotonous. But there was to be an end of it. The air had taken on a sensible chill, and mists hung low over the lakes and ponds. The hours of the afternoon were fast dropping away, and we could not help re-

marking that the sun was setting earlier than usual. A glance westward showed us the snow-capped Rockies, with the foot-hills at their base, already plunged in darkness, and we retired for the night to dream of glaciers and grizzlies, with the firm conviction, however, that the morrow would mark an epoch in our lives.

The hundred-ton iron monster that bore us onward so rapidly had left the plains and the foot-hills far behind it, and had already passed through two lofty vertical walls when we rolled out of our berths next morning. This was the "gap," or gate, of the Rocky Mountains, that we missed seeing. Running along the edge of the Bow River, the *Rosemere* had already slowed up at Canmore before I took my first peep outside.

After the monotony of a thousand miles over the level plains, the colossal upheavals that suddenly meet your gaze, make you think that the world itself had turned on end. The Three Sister Peaks, towering over Canmore station, with their snow-capped top-knots piercing the clouds, was the first bit of scenery demanding our attention. But when you have six hundred miles of sublime mountain views before you, you can

afford to wait; and after a wholesome whiff of the bracing morning air, I returned to the car, promising myself a passing glance at Banff, the Wonderland, the choicest bit of the Rocky Mountain Park. It was only a passing glance, however. The sulphur hot-springs and the big railway hotel, which I should like to have seen more closely, are some hundred yards up the valley; but the *Rosemere*, like the tide, waited for no man. So that I could seize only the outlines of the castle-shaped building, large and inviting, and crowded with guests. But what a pigmy it was beside the enormous Cascade and Inglismaldie Peaks standing up behind it!

The scenery from this point onward to the coast baffles description; never before had such sights met our eyes. Chasms and canyons yawning before us, ready to engulf us, *Rosemere* and all; rocks bigger than castles, that in by-gone ages had broken away from the mountain-sides, and, like avalanches, came crashing down with terrific force, carrying all before them to the valleys, thousands of feet below; torrents pent up in bottomless gorges, chafing and foaming against their prison walls, seeking an outlet; and above them all, in profound silence, the

snow-crested peaks of the Rocky and Selkirk ranges: these were the views that we were to meet during the next forty-eight hours. We followed the Bow River for a short distance, and stood in the observation-car, which joined us at Canmore, to sketch half a dozen old weather-beaten monarchs, Cascade, Pilot, Copper, Temple and Lefroy, the last-named peak touching the very skies.

We reached the base of Mount Stephen at 19.30 K., and found ourselves at an elevation of five thousand three hundred feet, just a mile above the level of the ocean, and the highest point at which rails were laid on the Canadian Pacific. A short distance ahead, a rustic sign-board, with colossal letters, called our attention to the "Great Divide." The *Rosemere* slowed up only an instant, but long enough to startle us, for we were on the backbone of the continent. A tiny stream was plainly seen dividing its waters, one branch flowing to Hudson's Bay, the other to the Pacific Ocean. We began to descend the western slope of the Rockies, Mount Hector always before us, through the wild Wapta Gorge or Kicking-Horse Pass. This name is a suggestive one, which has at least the merit of

being based on fact, and recalls a scene that took place during the Palliser expedition of 1857. Kicking-Horse Pass is a monument, more lasting than bronze, raised to the hind leg of Dr. Hector's broncho, with which the doctor came in contact once too often, while exploring the Wapta Gorge.

Here lies another provincial boundary-line, and we left the Alberta Territory and crossed into British Columbia, that western colony so distant, so unapproachable to eastern folk a few years ago, when a trip around the Horn, or over Panama, or across the plains in prairie schooners, was the only way to get there. But those were the days of the Trojans. Modern invention has done away with prairie schooners, and substituted vestibuled drawing-rooms, dining-cars, consolidated engines and all the rest of it.

Men have made this continent smaller, and easier to get over; the Canadian Pacific route through the Rocky Mountains shows us how they had to work to do it. If true railway engineering is the economical adaptation of means and opportunities to the end desired, the men who built this road may boast that they kept strictly within the definition. They made the best of the obstacles that stood before them

at every step. When curves would exempt them from tunnelling, they traced curves around the mountain-sides, and relied on swivel-trucks to guide the engine safely over them. When they had to climb up mountains, they "zig-zagged" till they made workable grades, and relied on heavy engines and track adhesion to do the rest. This was the only way out of the difficulty in many places, chiefly at the "Loop," near Ross Peak, where an enormous letter S, more or less ornamental, had to be described in the road, in order to overcome the difference of two levels.

The immense rock-cutting, and tunnelling, and cove-filling; the snow-sheds and level grading; the thirteen hundred trestles and iron bridges through those passes and mountain-ranges, will remain eternal monuments to man's victory over Nature's obstacles. Six and a half miles of snow-sheds, or artificial wooden tunnels with sloping roofs, are built over the road, where it hugs the mountain-sides. The massiveness and strength of those structures is the first thing that strikes one; but we were told that only such could resist the avalanches of snow and ice that fall from a height of two or three thousand feet above the track, not only cutting down every

thing in their path, but, by the force of the side-currents of air, breaking off trees two feet in diameter. The moisture-laden winds from the Pacific precipitate downfalls of snow, sometimes amounting to forty feet in a single winter; and the avalanches have been known to fill up ravines below the railway-track seven and eight hundred feet deep.

In several places in the Rockies, crib-work has been built on the mountain slopes, which successfully diverts the avalanches into other valleys. To avoid an obstacle of Nature is sometimes better than trying to surmount it. And seeing that something had to be done, it mattered little to the Canadian Pacific railway officials which method was adopted, provided the company's traffic were not interfered with. The best proof that Nature, in that rough section of the world, has been mastered, we gathered from a remark dropped by Mr. Marpole, an official who joined us at Donald. Although tunnels and bridges, and all manner of artificial work, follow in rapid succession over the whole Pacific division, right to the coast; although trains have been moving daily over them since 1885, with a mileage mounting into the millions, no passenger

ALASKA BUILDING, SEATTLE

holding a ticket has ever lost his life. This is certainly a remarkable railway record, but the moral to be drawn would seem to be: Pay your fare before you start to climb the Rockies.

CHAPTER IV

Through the Rockies — Resources of British Columbia

We crossed the Columbia River and entered the Selkirk range. While the driver was busy shutting off steam and turning on the air-brakes, the *Rosemere* ran into Roger's Pass, a short cut through the Selkirks, discovered during the building of the road. The railway line had been originally staked out by the Canadian government engineers, to run north of the great bend of the Columbia River. Major Roger, one of the new company's own engineers, a man of eccentric habits, it is said, and adventurous, started out one day, aimlessly, and followed a valley, up to then untrodden by a whiteman. Much to his own surprise and to the joy of the company, he found a short route which enabled them to reach the other branch of the Columbia without following the great bend. Roger's Pass lies between what have since been called Mount Macdonald and Hermit Peak, two bits of our globe which had been forced apart in by-gone ages, to make room for the future railway.

The discovery saved the young company nearly ninety miles of the hardest railway build-

ing in the world, as well as several millions of dollars, and it supplied the road with some of its finest mountain scenery. The gigantic trees for which British Columbia is famous, are there, keeping the Illicilliwaet valley in almost perpetual gloom. Only rare rays of sunlight ever reach those moistened mountain-sides; yet the foliage and underbrush are extravagant in their luxuriance. The fearful Albert canyon is also there, where the Illicilliwaet River, nearly three hundred feet below, rushes through a fissure twenty feet wide. Looking down you see nothing but a seething cauldron of dancing foam; there is a deafening roar; your eyes follow the rushing waters; you begin to grow dizzy, and you clutch the balcony that has been built over the edge of the ravine. If you then turn your eyes upward, you will see at the summit of Hermit Peak, an old cowled sentinel, who has been standing there since the world was young. I asked myself, as I looked at those cold, shrivelled features up among the Selkirks, If the old monk could speak, would he tell us when he went to live there? Would he tell us when the Creator of the Universe permitted the cataclysm that produced the Rockies and the Selkirks?

The *Rosemere* ran down along the Illicilliwaet, and twisted and turned in the valley, until presently, ahead of us, glinting in the sunlight, vast as all the ice fields of Switzerland combined, stood the great glacier of the Selkirks, a glacier that was glinting while the Pyramids were building, — vast, lofty, immense, buttressed, festooned, creviced — a sight unparalleled, perhaps, in this world of ours. "Imagine," says Murray, "you see jammed in between two mountains, a section of the Mississippi, tilted up and frozen solid; or the St. Lawrence pouring boldly over a mountain range, ten thousand feet above you, and turned, in an instant, into ice stiffened solid at its maddest plunge, a creation of ten thousand years, a monument of the past dead years, which all the rain and shine of other equal years to come will not efface; standing cold, monstruous, motionless, silent, sublime, within a distance so short from our parlor-car, that one might, by an easy stroll, stand under its ponderous front. How small we were beside that magnificent creation of ages, that landscape of frozen force, that overhanging world of changed energy, which, should Nature ever loosen the chilled links that bind it to the mountain-side, would sweep all before it."

The ding-dong of a dinner bell recalled us to humbler work than that of contemplating Nature's grandeurs, and we headed for the little Swiss-like chalet over beside the *Rosemere*. Here we lunched, for it was nearly fifteen o'clock. While sipping our tea, we took a final view of the Illicilliwaet valley, with its seventeen miles of mountain-sides, with its thousand tints and shadows of smoky purple ; we then boarded the train again, and moved on towards the coast. What an incomparable treat to have gone through the Rocky and the Selkirk ranges !

So many mountains piled one on the other, with such magnificent profusion, but, at the same time, so little habitable country, led me to remark to a neighbor in the observation-car, that British Columbia was good only to be looked at. But as chance would have it, I had fallen in with an old-time resident, who, with a look of positive disgust, silenced me with the remark that every schoolboy knew that British Columbia is good for three things, fish, trees, and gold. And this he brought home to me very forcibly before he had finished.

British Columbia, with its area of three hundred and eighty thousand square miles, was little

known till Vancouver and Cook began to sail along its coasts, a hundred years ago, and the hardy Scotch fur-traders to navigate its rivers and attach their names to them. A rich and exclusive field for fur companies, during the first half of the last century, it was only in 1857, that the discovery of gold modified the then existing state of things. In that year, ten thousand people entered the colony, chiefly from the gold-fields of California, and took up the gold-bearing lands on the Thompson and the Fraser Rivers. Yale and Hope, two old towns that we passed on the banks of the Fraser, are relics of the gold fever; and the old tote-road to the Cariboo district, nearly three hundred miles long, hugging the lofty cliff on the other side of the river, was pointed out to us from the *Rosemere's* windows.

The output of gold from British Columbia has been, up to this, about seventy million dollars, all but a fraction obtained by placer mining. But this was not satisfactory. The extensive alluvial deposits along the rivers and streams, indicated not merely the grinding action of the glaciers, and the washing out of the rocks by rain, but bespoke also gold-bearing lodes somewhere in

those lofty mountains, if they could only be found. Miners and prospectors have been for the past forty years roving over the province looking for the lodes ; the geologist, Dr. Dawson, catalogued one hundred and five locations where actual mining had been attempted previous to 1877. In 1890, prospectors were attracted by the outcroppings of iron oxides on Trail creek, a small stream in southern British Columbia. No one had dreamt of finding gold there in combination, but during the assays, the ore was found to be rich with the precious metal. This discovery explained how gold reached the placers ; it had leaked out of the iron sulphides, just as the nickel did out of the iron and copper sulphides at Sudbury. Steps were taken to develop those Trail creek lodes, and explorations that have been made during the past few years show that not merely the large district watered by Trail creek, of which Rossland is the centre of activity, but the whole Kootenay valley, are rich in auriferous ore.

Another source of wealth to this province is the fishing industry. Salmon abounds in the Fraser and Columbia Rivers, and even in the streams of the Kootenay district. Salmon from

the Fraser is found six hundred miles inland, while the other species of the finny tribe, such as oolachan, sturgeon, herring, trout, etc., swarm in the large rivers of the province. Fish is exported in vast quantities, salted, frozen, dried, and canned, the value of the salmon exportation alone, during the past twelve or fourteen years, being over twenty million dollars. The Indians also stow away large supplies for home use, fish being one of their chief articles of food. When the *Rosemere* was running along the cliffs of the Fraser, one of the interesting sights was to see the Chinese washing gold on the sand-bars; another, to see the Siwash natives, standing on the ledges of the projecting rocks, scooping up salmon and oolachan with their large dip-nets.

But the gigantic trees of British Columbia throw everything else, literally and figuratively, into the shade. Entire forests of them, the growth of centuries, densely packed together, are still standing, covering whole sections of the country with an almost impenetrable gloom, and assuring the world a timber supply for centuries to come. The trees increased in size apparently as we approached the coast; in Stanley Park, Vancouver, I measured a cedar trunk that was over

forty-five feet in circumference. After the fire there, in 1886, the Crown Land Office was perched on a stump, and remained in that position until proper quarters were prepared for it. Adirondack Murray gives us the interesting story of a tree that was brought down during his visit to the Pacific coast, to make room for an obscure building. He counted six hundred and seventy-four annual rings in it, which—those who pretend to know, say—gave the measure of its age. The tree was still sound, and had it been kept standing, had every prospect of living six hundred years more. It would suffice to have seen those monuments of centuries to appreciate Mr. Murray's indignation at their wanton destruction. He deplored the vandalism of the pioneers of Vancouver, he tells us, as he would do that of the Romans, were St. Peter's destroyed by a mob.

A few more hours down the valley of the Fraser, skirting along the borders of forests of wondrous growth, beside lakes alive with great fat ducks patiently waiting for the visit of a sportsman; then through a rough, wooded country, with here and there bits of marsh, and clearings, and farmers' houses, till finally

we steamed along the shore of Burrard's Inlet, the closing scene of the *Rosemere's* long journey across the continent. It was with a feeling of satisfaction, akin to enthusiasm, that Mr. Spencer's party stepped out at Vancouver, and began in real earnest to bask in Pacific sunshine, four thousand five hundred miles from Cape Spear.

The swarms of Chinese, pigtailed and bloused, lazily watching all our movements with their almond eyes, reminded us that we were next door to China. Along the docks, whole families of Sechelt Indians, dressed in brilliant colors, were sitting in their fantastic long boats, and chatting away in Chinook, giving us glimpses of a new civilization. The cosmopolitan character of coast-life was well illustrated next day when I took the stage to visit the salmon-canning factories at Steveston. Seated with me in the rickety, old leathern-springed coach, were two white miners, two Chinamen, a Japanese, and a Chinook Indian, the last-named puffing away at a cigar.

Vancouver is a new city, growing like its western neighbors at a phenomenal rate. The site was under a dense forest until a score of

years ago, when the Canadian Pacific railway people took it in hand and began to lay out avenues in a wilderness. In 1886, a conflagration swept the rising town away, but the ashes had hardly cooled when the young phœnix reappeared rejuvenated and resplendent. At the present time, large blocks, palatial hotels, churches, trolley cars, asphalt pavements, attest the advances this western end of the great railway has made. The company's Chinese and Australasian steamship service has its terminus here also; and Vancouver bids fair in shipping interests alone, to become a serious rival of the American ocean ports further south.

I was now two thousand nine hundred miles from Montreal, and there was still that distance to cover on the Pacific Ocean and the Bering Sea before I reached my destination. The Crow's Nest railway, which branched from the main line near Medicine Hat, before we reached the Rockies, had tempted me to renew acquaintance with Crow's Nest mountain, and to enjoy once more the superb view of that massive three-storey monument of vegetation, bare rock and perpetual snow. But the unparalleled grandeur of the Rockies and the Selkirks, and the persevering kind-

ness of mine host of the *Rosemere*, changed my itinerary to Vancouver, where I met several old friends, whose smiles of welcome were rays of sunshine on that distant coast, and whose vigorous hand-shakes were things to be remembered.

My course now lay southward, and I started from Revelstoke for Spokane. Stern-wheel steamboats, large and comfortable, ply through the Arrowhead and Slocan Lakes, sheets of water locked in among the Rocky Mountains, and reflecting on their glassy surfaces a dozen weather-beaten, snow-capped peaks. Here and there on the cliffs, hundreds of feet above the water, you could see holes made, with picks and powder, by men looking for that yellow metal called gold. At Rossland, where a whole day was spent, a visit to the well-known LeRoy mine was extremely interesting; and I had a splendid chance to examine the ore and the treatment it receives before it is sent to the smelters at Trail and Northport.

I followed the Columbia River for a few miles down through the State of Washington, and marvelled at the feats of the railway builders, who had to pick their way through that mountainous country. Some of the spots on the

Spokane and Northern railway were simply terrifying. The curves south of Rossland and at Seven Devils, the only appropriate name for a set of rocks overhanging the Columbia, would unnerve the coolest vertebrate that ever lived. But even here Nature offers compensations. A beautiful waterfall was to be seen on the line, at some distance before we crossed the Columbia. And the startling feature of the view is that no matter how the train twisted, we could not loose sight of the trickling, snow-white stream as it fell, ribbon-like, from a hill-top to the bottom of a chasm.

Colville, an Indian reservation, ancient and picturesque, is on the same road. We ran close to the buildings and schools, where the Nezqualim and Poel tribes have been, for over sixty years, under the care of the Jesuit Fathers of the Rocky Mountain missions.

Spokane is a hundred and fifty miles from Rossland, and was merely a haunt of the Spokane Indian, twenty years ago. It is now a flourishing city of thirty or forty thousand people. It owes its present importance to the magnificent water-power, furnished by the river of the same name, which goes tumbling over rocks and down

cliffs at various points within the limits of the city; and although the water-power is only partially developed, vast commercial interests are already centred there.

The Jesuits, who were the pioneer missionaries among the Spokane tribes, have a large and flourishing college there. I also met at Spokane several Sisters of Providence and Sisters of the Holy Names. These admirable Montreal communities have flourishing institutions there, and at other places along the Pacific coast. By their devotedness to the sick in hospitals, and their success in their schools and convents, they are doing a great deal for the Church in that western country.

We had our choice between the Great Northern and the Northern Pacific from Spokane to Seattle. Both railways cross the Cascade range of the Rockies; and the scenic grandeur of both routes, we were told, is worth all the printer's ink that is spent in describing it. The long tunnel, recently completed under the Cascades, at a cost of several millions, weighed in favor of the Great Northern. I wished to see how Nature had again been overcome in one of her most inaccessible trongholds, and I did not regret the choices I

made. The Great Northern is the creation of J. J. Hill, the railway king of St. Paul, who was born near Guelph, Ont., sixty or seventy years ago; and you may read in every rock-cut and trestle, along the road, the energy of this prince among railway builders.

Before you reach the Cascades, the road passes through some strikingly beautiful scenery, especially through the Big-Bend wheat country, but it also runs through some very dismal spots. It seldom falls to the lot of any one to wander through a more desolate region than the lava-plains lying along the Columbia River. Everything you see, out of the car window, for many miles, is a barren waste of bare rocks, covered in spots with layers of drifting sand. Rising here and there, among them, are huge rugged columns of basalt, of all heights and shapes, standing like silent monuments to an unknown past. It would be hard to tell you the depressing effect produced on one by the utter helplessness and hopelessness of a scene like that. Nothing growing, nothing going to grow in that dreadful valley; and to think that a thousand years from now, the same scene will meet the eyes of men. The basalt pillars are, however,

slowly crumbling away. The disintegrating effects of frost and heat are plainly seen in the cone-like piles that surround their bases; but they have withstood the ravages of the centuries long enough to bear testimony to the activity and destructiveness of prehistoric volcanoes.

The rest of our journey from Spokane made us forget all about the desolate lava-plain. We crossed the Columbia and ran into a country where everything was green and gay; and then began to leave orchards and fruit-gardens beneath us, as we gradually approached the mountain-range through gorges and canyons. Climbing the Cascade range, and looking down on the valleys, thousands of feet below you, was a pleasant task when you could do it in an observation-car; you can still see, zig-zagging up the mountain-side, the "switch-back," which proved such an attraction to travellers over the Great Northern after it was built. There is less mountain-climbing along that railway now; the long Cascade tunnel runs two miles and a half through the very heart of the enormous mountain which our forbears had to ride over; and we were left to imagine what the emotions of climbing on a "switch-back" must have been.

THE "SS. ROANOKE"

NOME, ON THE BERING COAST

It took us only ten minutes to go through the tunnel from Cascade to Wellington; but as that hole through the mountain brought the East a couple of hours nearer the Pacific coast, it meant a vast saving of time and money for the railway; and that is precisely the reason why Hill spent years and millions in digging it out.

Like the Canadian Pacific farther north, the Great Northern displayed, everywhere in those mountains, much ingenuity in overcoming the difficulties which Nature had piled up so abundantly in its path. The marvels the engineers have done in bridging and trestle-work, in loops and tunnelling, is a credit to their skill and daring. The loop in the Selkirk range on the Canadian Pacific, and the other in the Crow's Nest Pass, are wonderfully well-planned, especially the latter; but I do not know whether either will compare with the twists and turns on the Great Northern, which permit you to descend imperceptibly and quickly from the top of a mountain to the valley, a couple of thousand feet below.

When you are in the valley you are on the western slope of the Cascade range, and you begin to run through vast forests of Washington

fir and cedar — formidable giants, straight as plumb-lines and towering to the skies — whose tops are covered with mantles of greenest verdure, and whose feet are hidden in masses of shrub-wood and gigantic ferns. The contrast between this scene of luxuriant vegetation and the arid lava-plains, which I had just left behind me, forces one to ask why Nature distributes her favors so unevenly.

I had been so engrossed in singling out big trees, and straining my neck trying to see their summits, that the hours passeed quickly away, and with them passed the miles; and before I was quite aware of it, I had reached the borders of Puget Sound. Along the edge of that noble arm of the Pacific the train rolled through Snohomish, Everett, and other small towns, and finally brought me to Seattle, which was to be the terminus of my land journey.

CHAPTER V

Seattle. — Over the Pacific. — The Aleutian Islands.

Seattle is a modern, go-ahead, American seaport, which is kept busy from morning till night telling people all about its advantages, natural and acquired. It is pronounced *See-ah-tle*, and takes its name from an old Indian chief, whose portrait is now a well-known curio on the coast. The place is really forty years old, but, during the first twenty, was little more than a respectable site, with rare possibilities. It passed through the usual ordeal of fire and recovered from the effects rapidly. The last ten years, especially, have witnessed a transformation in the city, rarely seen even in western towns. Seattle is advancing by leaps and bounds, in a way that makes the more enthusiastic of its citizens already look upon it as a dangerous rival for San Francisco.

The discovery of gold in the Klondike, nine years ago, and a couple of years later in Northwestern Alaska, gave a tremendous impetus to its commerce. Seattle had been waiting for just such a windfall, and is still profiting by it more than any other western port. Its warehouses

and docks are filled with cargoes for the Arctic; and vessels laden to the water-line, are constantly leaving it for northern points. Nine out of every ten destined for Alaska sail out through Puget Sound from Seattle.

The city is solidly and tastefully built on a hill-side, which slopes down to the water's edge. Its avenues run parallel with the Sound, and rise like steps of stairs till they reach the summit. For hills, and steep places, and break-neck spots, Seattle, I think, eclipses Quebec, and fairly rivals St. John's, Newfoundland. But there is this advantage over those two cities: you need not climb hills in Seattle. You simply jump into a cable-car, a gong rings, the grip-man pulls a lever, and there you are, at the top of the hill.

Time is money in Seattle; everything is done and said there with Spartan brevity. The way of addressing you, the signs on the houses and in the street cars, are all to the point—no useless prose in Seattle. At home, we read: "Don't get off while the car is in motion." Out West they simply print: "Wait till the car stops." At home, we put on our doors: "No admission except on business." In Seattle you read: "Keep out! that means you!" In a Spokane

car, I read the brief but ominous warning: "Don't get off backwards." And above the four words was the graphic sketch of what happened to a man who did. Strangely enough, that man was a Westerner!

Our stay in Seattle was gladdened with the news, which came to us from the North, that the two steamers, the *Portland* and the *Jeanie*, reported lost in the ice for a month, had been seen and rescued north of the Bering Strait. This news brought great joy to thousands of citizens; and extra editions of the dailies, giving thrilling details of the rescue, were bought up rapidly. But this was only another shocking instance of the way vile, mercenary newspapers will speculate on the emotions of heart-broken friends and relatives. A few hours later, a second report had to be circulated that the first one was false. There was no foundation for the rumored rescue, and when we started off, July 3rd, on our long journey up the Pacific, it was under the sad impression that two Alaskan vessels, bound for the same port as we, had gone to the bottom.

Our party of four, destined for mission work in Alaska, secured a passage on the *Roanoke*,

an old but reliable vessel in the Pacific trade. For fifteen years she had seen service in the Old Dominion Line between New York and some Virginian port. Six years ago, she became the property of a western trading corporation, sailed round Cape Horn and up the Pacific coast. During the Spanish-American war she was in commission as a transport to the Philippines. The *Roanoke* has since been kept steadily in the Alaskan service; and for having brought safely to the United States the first four millions that were dug up in the new gold-fields, she rejoices in the title of "treasure-ship of the Alaskan fleet." The skipper, Captain Weaver, is a native of Nova Scotia, and, though still a young man, has had, his officers told me, all the experiences of an "old salt." His wife and five-year-old daughter accompanied him on this trip; needless to say, the precious little maid soon became the favorite of all the passengers on board. There were forty or fifty of us, representing the types usually found on every ocean voyage, in these and other latitudes; some exacting and hard to please; others indifferent and easy going; some were miners, starting out to look after their interests in Alaska; a few were the wives and

families of miners, going north to meet their husbands and fathers; the rest were pleasure-seekers, killing time on a summer-cruise in Arctic waters.

Before getting away we had to submit to certain medical formalities. Since Uncle Sam has begun to dabble in Imperialism, he has grown wary of microbes. He will look after his own germs, he tells us, and he wants other countries to look after theirs. In order to carry out this reasonable programme effectively, he quite recently enacted several stringent quarantine-laws, which add another element of *ennui* to those which the over-laden traveller has already to put up with.

However, it is not the laws that one can object to, but the way of applying them. Just before the gangway of the *Roanoke* was drawn, a ship-steward began to beat a Japanese gong, ordering everybody down stairs for inspection. Down behind us came the health-inspector, a long, lanky individual, with sickly mien, who looked as if he needed some one to inspect him. He began to call out our names, which he could hardly decipher on the purser's list. We left the room, one by one, when the man with the list,

who stood near the staircase, was supposed to scrutinize us through and through. But this was the moment to smile. The inspector was near-sighted, and any one of us could have safely smuggled in Canadian microbes as big as horned yearlings.

We sailed up Puget Sound, a splendid stretch of water, and saw it covered with all kinds of craft going to and coming from different parts of the globe. Port Townsend lay on a hill at our left, as we went north; but we soon turned directly west into the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Off to our right, plainly visible, stood the lofty Race-Rock lighthouse, marking the entrance to Esquimalt, on Vancouver Island, the seat of the North Pacific British squadron; and four miles east of Esquimalt lay the quiet city of Victoria, the capital of British Columbia.

One hundred and ten years ago, Captain George Vancouver, with his faithful lieutenants, Puget, Johnstone, Whidbey, and Baker, sailed along this coast, entered these inlets, measured and marked down every bight, and bay, and cape. Any modern map will show how broken is this portion of America, and what a difficult task Vancouver had undertaken. But so well

did he do his work, even with the crude hydrographic methods then in vogue, that very little reconstruction has had to be done since, to complete the charts of Vancouver Island and the Alaskan Archipelago.

Few pioneer explorers have deserved so well of posterity as Vancouver; nor has posterity forgotten him. His name lives along this coast; and the heroic statue, which stands on the new and splendid Parliament House at Victoria, is a recent tribute to the painstaking methods and excellent work of the grimy old captain. Vancouver was not only a clever seaman, but also a staunch friend; he immortalized not merely his comrades, but many of his absent friends as well, by attaching their names to the natural features along the Pacific coast.

Night was falling when we neared Cape Flattery, leaving behind us the Olympian range, with Mount Olympus in the background; and by bed-time, the long, majestic swell told us plainly we were heaving on the bosom of the Pacific. The first two days, or rather three, were disagreeable for most of us on board. Heavy seas were on; port-holes had to be kept closed, and doors and hatches battened down.

The *Roanoke* rolled and heaved on the waves, which made us miserable, indeed; if you will add to our misery the very disheartening effects the reported loss of the two steamships still had on us, and the sincere sympathy we all had for the victims and their friends, you will know just how we felt.

The physical commotions, peculiar to sea-sickness, which none of us hankered for, and few of us escaped, had already begun to overpower us in their most unattractive forms, and the really dismal days had surely come. There were a few among the passengers who swaggered about the deck on the strength of their wave-proof stomachs, and who boasted because they never missed a meal; but the rest of us had to submit, without a word of sympathy from anyone, to the inevitable "ups and downs"—chiefly the "ups"—of that most distressing of all the sufferings our poor fallen race is heir to. I write feelingly on this subject of sea-sickness after my recent experience in Newfoundland waters. Add to the nauseating horrors of the situation, the sounding of the hideous Japanese gong, which filled our ears three times a day, as we lay helpless in our berths. The mockery of the thing!

It called us to meals that we vowed we should never touch again,

However, after three days the crisis was over. One by one the afflicted passengers began to creep out of their staterooms, timidly at first, as if they feared a bantering at the melancholy show they had made of themselves. But this feeling was short-lived; with health and conscious strength came courage. The gastric machinery soon resumed its normal functions; and our voyage onward over the great Summer Sea became one pleasant holiday. Splendid weather prevailed to Unalaska, which enabled every one to stay on deck. It was then that the selfish element, ever latent in us mortals, and ever waiting for an outlet, began to display itself. Everybody set about making himself—mostly herself—just as comfortable as possible. Rugs and shawls and easy chairs of impossible combinations and indefinite sprawling capacity, began to take up precious room on deck, to the great inconvenience of many. It was a study in real life to watch the various phases of exasperation one of the passengers, a pompous old gentleman, got into, whenever he wanted to inhale fresh air. At every turn he made up and

down the deck, he had to describe a circle around the paraphernalia of a couple of haughty Gibson maidens and their stately mother, who looked at him, every time he passed, as resentfully as if they owned the ship.

Those of us who desired peace and quiet sought some nook, fore or aft, where we could inhale ozone and count the whales which kept sporting and spouting quite close to the vessel. Several came so near that they received bullets and explosive shells from the dead-shots on board. This kind of a reception was evidently not appreciated by the ponderous cetaceans, for they invariably turned somersaults in the water and disappeared under the waves.

On the fifth day out, in the early morning, three long whistles told us we were meeting and saluting a vessel. The ship turned out to be the *Portland*, which had been imprisoned in the Arctic ice-floes for five weeks. She was on her way back to Seattle to give her own exclusive story of her thrilling experiences in the Bering Strait and the Arctic Ocean. The Seattle newspapers had guessed well, but they had only guessed. We learned when we reached Unalaska that the *Portland's* companion in misfortune,

the *Jeanie*, had also escaped, but had not fared so well. The crushing ice in Bering Strait had damaged her hull, and she had to lie up for repairs. Although the *Roanoke* followed, for four days, the track of the Japanese and Chinese steamships, the *Portland* was the only vessel we met on the whole voyage.

The daily record of the log, as well as other indications, told us that we were not far from the Aleutian Islands. Wild geese, wild ducks and parrot-billed puffins were hovering about us in myriads, or were making for their homes on the coast; and we, too, not to be outdone by our feathered neighbors, began to stretch our necks for land. Fogs came and went in rapid succession, much to the disgust of the captain; for there are no light-houses on those bleak coasts, and the officers of the *Roanoke* had to be on the alert day and night. At last, on the evening of the seventh day out from Seattle, a hazy, dark spot was seen looming up on the misty horizon; it kept growing steadily until the darkness set in. This was a lofty peak on Akutan Island, and this was the first glimpse many of us on board had of the Aleutian chain, the "stepping-stones" to Asia.

There are several passages into Bering Sea through those islands; ours lay through the Akutan Pass. During the night the *Roanoke* sailed at half-speed, and next morning we were in the Pass, with land on every side of us. On our right, quite close to us apparently, but really far up, on what looked like a table-land flanked by two peaks, we observed a dark volume of smoke rising slowly into the clouds. One's first impression was that a village of Aleuts had camped up there, with a common fire for all, or, perhaps, a bon-fire. But great was our surprise when we learned that we were looking at a real, live volcano.

We stayed nearly a whole day at Dutch Harbor, a splendid bay in Unalaska Island, another of the Aleutian group, and the head-quarters of several large Alaskan commercial companies, where we took coal and water. There is also a coaling-station here for the United States revenue service; it is from this point that the seal rookeries on Pribiloff and Bouldyer Islands are protected. The revenue cutter, *Manning*, was moored at the long wharf, ready to start for a newly-discovered rookery on Attic Island. I had the pleasure of visiting the

dainty sea-wanderer, from stem to stern, under the intelligent guidance of Chief Engineer Bowen.

A mile away, beyond the hill, lay the quaint Russian-Aleut village of Illiuliuk, and plainly visible farther off, in the background, Mount Makushin, another active volcano, with clouds of white steam rising from it. The ship's surgeon, Dr. Brenton, and I, took the trail over to Illiuliuk. Our path lay around the edge of the hill, and was bordered with a profusion of wild flowers of great beauty. Ferns, mosses, tundra grass and blue-berry bushes hid the ground right down to the water's edge. They were richly sprinkled with violets, which grew there in countless numbers, and which were the largest I had ever seen.

Illiuliuk is now generally known as Unalaska, after the island on which it is built. It was one of the first of the Russian settlements in America, and was a place of some importance, when Captain Cook dropped anchor in the little land-locked harbor in 1788. A newly-built Russian church, with its bulb-shaped steeple, tipped with the double-armed cross, stands in a picturesque position on the water's edge, and gives a decidedly Muscovite air to the place. One of the

Russian priests, who spoke excellent English, took Dr. Brenton and myself around the place, and volunteered much of the information I am giving here. He told us that the Orthodox Church (Russian-Greek, of course,) has had a mission in Unalaska for one hundred and thirteen years. Outside of the commercial companies, the languages of the place are Russian and Aleutian; but the other tongues of civilization were fully represented there.

Commerce with miners and tourists is carried on in English in Unalaska. You may buy at a couple of large stores all kinds of Russian curios in walrus-ivory; you may lay in a supply of Siberian seal-teeth by the pound or the bushel, just as it suits you; you will take home with you, unless you resist the pressure brought to bear upon you, pairs of Russian candlesticks whose curves and flourishes would grace a fairy's bower; you may become the proud possessor of tea-sets, hand-painted and fired in Russia, and authenticated with Russian hieroglyphics, provided you are willing to pay the prices the merchants ask. There were several relics of Russian domination still left in the little Aleutian village, which whetted my curiosity very much. I took

CAPE SPEAR, NEWFOUNDLAND, THE EXTREME
EASTERLY POINT OF AMERICA

CAPE PRINCE OF WALES, ALASKA, THE EXTREME
WESTERLY POINT OF AMERICA

a snapshot of one of the old cannon lying harmless and rusty in the square near the church, while Dr. Brenton and a few young Aleuts rested on the guns. Just as I was about to press the button, an obliging cow, with conscious grace, stepped into focus, to give a touch of nature to the group.

In the afternoon, the surgeon and I took a last look at Mount Makushin and retraced our steps across the trail over the hill, quite satisfied with the day's work and thoroughly tired of seeing things. It was the same old story of mental weariness, and a confirmation of the sad psychological fact, that strange sights quickly lose their interest, once you have seen them. The sight of two active volcanoes was certainly a novel treat for me, and the one of the whole trip I appreciated the most. It may have been the recent catastrophe in Martinique that lent a peculiar interest to the first view I ever had of one of the safety-valves of our globe.

Akutan and Makushin are only two of the sixty-one volcanoes still active along the Aleutian chain. I read in a recent work that, during the past three hundred years, those volcanoes have been in violent eruption over fifty times. Many

of them are quite lively yet; for vessels sailing in Alaskan waters frequently meet with large quantities of pumice-stone floating on the surface of the Pacific ocean. One captain reported, while we were moored at Dutch Harbor, that his ship had just sailed through twenty miles of it.

The Aleutian group forms part of the line of weakness of the earth's crust, and connects the mountains of the western coast of America with the volcanic ranges running through Kamchatka, Japan, and down to Java and the Philippines. The islands are all volcanic in origin; they have been thrown up from the bottom of the ocean at various times; the last, the New Bogoslof, a little over twenty years ago.

It must be an exciting experience to assist at the birth of a volcano. This was what Kriukoff, a Russian trader, did on May 7, 1796. He was on Unimak, an island close to Unalaska, when a dreadful convulsion of the sea took place, accompanied by noises loud and long, like peals of thunder. A great column of dark smoke, shrouded in steam and fog, rose to the skies, and spread out like a vast mushroom, over a space many miles in circumference. During the same night, fire burst up, as it were, from the bottom of the

sea, and brilliantly lighted the whole country. When the sun rose next morning and cleared the fogs away, a new and lofty peak, belching forth flames and lava, was seen protruding above the waves. This was named Bogoslof.

In 1883, another upheaval of the earth's crust took place within a mile or so of the peak just mentioned. It was apparently unseen by anyone, for there is no chronicle of the month or day on which the event took place. All that is known is that twenty-two years ago, a second peak, vomiting fire and lava, appeared beside Old Bogoslof, and received the name of New Bogoslof. Those islands were too far westward and too indistinct for snap-shooting; but the story of their recent origin was extremely interesting.

All these historical details were given me by an officer on the *Roanoke*, and they were welcome; for I eagerly seized on every little scrap of information concerning a land, up to this, so distant and unknown to me. While in Seattle I was lucky enough to lay hands on an elaborate Report by Ivan Petroff on Alaska, published by the Washington Government in 1882. The historical portion of this work, which bears the

marks of care and research, clearly shows that the Czar's administration in Alaska had been as full of romantic incident as that of the Hudson's Bay Company when it lorded it over Western Canada.

We quitted the Aleutian Islands, and started out on the last seven hundred miles of our journey, through the Bering Sea, due north. A few days of rain and fog did not prevent us from making good time, but they kept me in my stateroom, where I had leisure to study Petroff's Report, a summary of which may prove interesting to my readers.

CHAPTER VI

The Russian Domination in Alaska

THE story of Muscovite exploration in Northwestern America hardly goes back farther than the first voyage of Vitus Bering, in 1733. It was about that time that the world began to have some definite knowledge of the North Pacific and the waters connecting it with the Arctic ocean. No expedition is known to have gone thither exclusively for commerce till 1743; but from that time onward, for about one hundred and twenty-five years, Russian merchants and adventurers hunted and traded along the main Alaskan coast and the Aleutian and Kurile groups of islands. The traders all hailed from the Siberian port of Okhotsk, and from points on the Kamchatka peninsula. If any one doubted the nationality of those Alaskan pioneers, it would suffice to mention such names as Nevodchikof, Trapiznikof, Nikiforof, Bashmakof, and a dozen others, equally mellifluous, which I ran across in Petroff's work.

In 1762, a merchant, Andreian Tolstykh, after a sojourn of three years in those regions, insisted on their commercial importance before Catherine

II. His report had far-reaching results. On the strength of it, the Empress raised Tolstykh to the Siberian nobility, and ordered Chicherin, governor of Siberia, with two lieutenants, Krenitzin and Lavashof, to explore the new country and report fully on its resources. These officials sailed from Kamchatka in government vessels, in 1768, and began their work seriously. But the enmity of the natives rendered their attempts well-nigh fruitless. This enmity was a legacy left them by a few individual explorers who had covered the same ground in previous years, and who had stained their fur and ivory traffic with extortion and butchery. The adventurers had become so unscrupulous in their oppressive methods that they at last drove the natives to retaliation. Just six years previously, in 1762, the Aleuts slaughtered one hundred and fifty Russians on the island of Unalaska, sparing only four of an entire expedition. It is no wonder that Chicherin did not succeed.

Not until 1780 was Russian traffic on Bering Sea continued on civilized lines. The efforts of two shrewd traders, Grigor Shelikof and Ivan Golikof, brought about this result. They foresaw the early destruction of the native popula-

tion if some fundamental reform in the methods of doing business with them were not resorted to. They formed a company " to sail for Aliaska-land, known as America, and for known and unknown islands, to carry on the fur trade and to establish friendly intercourse with the natives."

In August, 1783, three vessels left Okhotsk, with Shelikof in command. They visited Kadiak, a large island in the North Pacific, which they decided to colonize. It was thickly populated with natives; Shelikof says about four thousand, which Petroff considers an exaggeration. These natives were evidently still smarting under the cruelties practised during former expeditions, for they peremptorily ordered Shelikof to quit the island, following up the order, a few days later, with a savage attack on the Russians. They were repulsed only after great slaughter on both sides; and Shelikof completed his victory by driving the natives over precipices into the sea, retaining twenty of their children as hostages. These vigorous measures cowed them efficaciously and gave the Russians the supremacy they were so anxious to acquire.

Shelikof organized his colony on Kadiak island, and then began a systematic exploration of other

neighboring islands and the mainland around Cook's Inlet and Prince William Sound,—spots on the map whose names recall Captain Cook's visit to those waters in 1778. This hardy old mariner left a British impress on the nomenclature of the North Pacific and the Bering Sea, which they bear even to this day. Spanish and French vessels had sailed around the same coasts, a few years previously, and had taken possession of them, one after the other, "by right of discovery," but Shelikof quietly removed all marks of foreign sovereignty as fast as he found them, and substituted the Russian, taking care, at the same time, to bring vividly before the natives everywhere the prestige and marvellous power of the Empress Catherine.

After an absence of three years, he made a flying trip back to Russia, to get government sanction for all he had done, and to obtain funds to extend his enterprise. He displayed before the high officials of St. Petersburg a chart of the newly-discovered lands, and stated boldly that fifty thousand subjects had been added to the Russian Empire and were ready to accept the Christian religion; evidently a series of pious exaggerations made for commercial purposes.

On his way to St. Petersburg, Shelikof had interested Jacobi, the new governor of Siberia, who pleaded his cause with the Empress. Exclusive rights were asked for the new company, with a bonus of two hundred thousand rubles from the State Treasury. This was granted on the spot by the public-spirited Empress; and besides personal distinctions which she lavished on the promoter himself, she supplied him with medals and presents for the chiefs of the Alaskan tribes. Jacobi, for his share, contributed wooden crosses and copper plates, inscribed with the imperial coat of arms, to be raised here and there as tokens of Russian sovereignty.

Strengthened with the favor of the court and a share of the public money, Shelikof returned to his enterprises with renewed vigor; and in a very short time nearly all his rivals, the smaller trading concerns, went to the wall. Fortune favored this adventurer, although Petroff tells us he had not yet gained the good will of the natives. In illustration of their enmity—was it not rather their thieving propensity?—it was found impracticable to put up the copper plates and crosses in any prominent position. As soon as the Russians had turned their backs, the Thlin-

kets seized every scrap of metal they could lay hands on and carried it off.

In those years, the overland trade between Russia and China, once prosperous, had almost entirely ceased, owing to the ease with which English and Dutch vessels poured manufactured goods into the Celestial Kingdom. It was Shelikof's design to revive this trade with Russia by water; and he began to take his measures with the greater alacrity that Gerassim Pribilof had accidently discovered, in 1786, the summer resort of the precious fur seal, on what are still known as Pribilof Islands in Bering Sea. The Chinese prized seal fur above any other; and the news that hundreds of thousands of seals congregated annually on two small islands within easy reach in the neighboring sea, was welcome news indeed. Trade with China was now certain of renewal, and was bound to be lucrative.

There were still several private hunters in the region; but only one serious rival, the Lebedev-Lastochkin Company, dared hold ground against Shelikof. Rival posts were erected on islands and on the mainland along Cook's Inlet; and bloody scenes were enacted, similar to those which were witnessed a few years later in Canada between

the Hudson's Bay and the Northwest Fur Companies. At one time the depredations carried on almost reached the magnitude of war.

This fighting among the Russians themselves had a pernicious effect upon the native population; but what was far more serious for Shelikof, it was reducing dividends. With all the foresight of a modern monopolist, he set to work quietly to buy up shares in the rival company, and began to look around him for a leader with a strong arm and a stronger head to carry on his work in Russian America. He finally selected Alexander Baranof, a Siberian merchant, who had displayed extraordinary energy in the management of his own affairs. A contract was signed between them, in August, 1790; and Baranof, the man who finally established Russian empire in America, sailed for his new field of action.

Baranof was small of stature, but was possessed of great powers of endurance and an all-devouring ambition. He had occasion to show his muscular strength, shortly after his arrival at Kadiak, by strangling to death an unfortunate Russian who had incurred his displeasure. During the first years of his career in Siberia, he

had displayed great penetration and decision of character, talents which he brought into play shortly after his arrival in Alaska. The spot on Kadiak Island, chosen by Shelikof, was ill-adapted for the larger scale of operations Baranof had in view, and, without further ado, he removed the whole establishment to another site, St. Paul's harbor, on the north-east end of the same island. There he began to work with great vigor. He sent out crews in long skin-covered boats, who coasted along the Aleutian peninsula, and returned to St. Paul's with large quantities of fur and ivory. In 1793, he brought to Kadiak a number of Siberian convicts, especially mechanics and farm laborers, with their families, in all about two hundred persons. He established a shipyard on Prince William Sound, where the size and quality of the timber were suited for shipbuilding; and the hulls of Russian vessels began to grow under the supervision of an English shipwright, named Shields, who had left the British navy for the Russian. With increased facilities, Baranof was able to extend his explorations eastward as far as Yakutat; and he was reaping a rich harvest of sea-otter about the time that Captain Vancouver, with his two

ships, the *Discovery* and the *Chatham*, was coasting northward through these same waters, in 1794.

Shelikof, the founder of the company, whose enterprise and influence at home had given such impetus to commerce in the North Pacific, died in 1792. But he had had the satisfaction of seeing the two schemes he had most at heart, on the eve of accomplishment. One was the opening up of the Chinese market for seal-furs and ivory ; the other was the union, under one administration, of the various minor fur companies trading in Eastern Siberia, Kamchatka and Alaska. This consolidation was completed, in 1797, under the supervision of Shelikof's widow and his partner, Golikof.

The new and powerful organization, under the name of the Russian-American Company, obtained, in 1799, a charter from the Czar Paul I, which gave it exclusive rights to the American territory, to the resources of land and water, and to whatever might be found in the interior of the earth, in the Siberian possessions of Kamchatka, Okhotsk, and the Kurile islands. "This charter, secured for twenty years," says Petroff, "marks an epoch in the history of Alaska,"

which, from that time till the transfer of the country to the United States, in 1867, became identified with the Russian-American Company.

The privileges conferred on the new company were very great and very exclusive in character. But the obligations imposed were also very heavy. It was exempt from all royalty or rent to the home government; it had the right to carry its now flag; to employ naval officers to command its vessels, and to claim the "High Protection of His Imperial Majesty." In return for these privileges, the company was compelled to maintain civil government in those new countries; to provide for the establishment of the Orthodox Church; and, most burdensome of all, to keep at various points in the vast territory, magazines and stores of goods to be used by the imperial government, for its vessels and troops, whenever it was necessary.

As this was the first enterprise of the kind in the Russian empire, it attracted a good deal of attention in Moscow and St. Petersburg; and the company soon had among its shareholders not merely high officials of the government, but even members of the royal family. The success of the British in India, in those years, through

the operations of the East India Company, had dazzled the Russians; and dreams of similar conquests on the Pacific began to haunt their official circles. The annexation of Japan and portions of the Chinese coast, on one side of the Pacific; and of the whole coast down to the Gulf of California, on the other, was a programme that appealed to the friends of the company; it was certainly ambitious enough to stimulate Russian pride and enterprise.

While this castle building was going on at home, Baranof, whose energy had been drawing him farther eastward every year, was beginning to have troubles of his own in Aliaska-land. He had planned to extend the domain of the Company to the Alexander archipelago, but when his officers began to visit Southeastern Alaska, they found English and American vessels trading in sea-otter with the Thlinkets, with English headquarters actually established at Nootka, on Vancouver Island.

These were crucial moments for Baranof. He had instructions from the home authorities to crush all rivals, and to wipe out Nootka. But he prudently refrained from showing open opposition to either the English or the Americans. He

decided to fortify a post in the archipelago, from which he could control the fur trade with the foreigners themselves, and thus secure from them supplies for his own people. He spent the whole winter of 1799-1800 in building a fort at Sitka, six miles from the present capital of Alaska. He strengthened the place as well as his resources would allow, and put it under the command of Medvednikof. But the American vessels ignored his reminders, and continued to trade with the natives, bartering firearms for furs. Baranof returned to Kadiak, after his winter's work at Sitka, to find the garrison in a state of insurrection, with a portion of it ready to sail for other climes. Rumors of war with England reached him at the same time, and obliged him to make the round of the Russian trading posts to instruct the officials what to do in the event of the appearance of British cruisers.

Meanwhile the troubles of Baranof were only beginning. The hostile Thinklets—Koloshes, the Russians called them—massacred Medvednikof and the garrison at Sitka, and burned the fort. About the same time, one hundred and eighty Aleutian hunters were surprised and slaughtered by the same warlike Thlinkets; and another

COUNCIL MINING CAMP

CHINIK, ON GOLOVIN BAY

party of one hundred perished by eating poisonous mussels, in what has ever since been known as Destruction Strait. Disasters followed each other in rapid succession. Three vessels laden with supplies, were wrecked on their way from Okhotsk; and had Baranof not been able to buy provisions from a ship which had just arrived at Kadiak from New York, the Russian-American colony would have reached the verge of starvation.

All these mishaps were making the life of the old Russian miserable. Jealousy and calumny were now to augment the difficulties of his position. In 1801, Alexander I. succeeded the Czar Paul. When the commander at Okhotsk made the official announcement of the event, he ordered Baranof to gather together all the natives of Kadiak and the surrounding country, and demand from them the oath of allegiance. The order was an imprudent one; carrying it out at that time would have been an act of folly; for it would have revealed to the astute Thlinkets the precarious state of the colony. Besides, Baranof could not rely on the Russians in his service; and he decided to ignore the order for the moment. A degraded official tried to make capi-

tal out of this, and brought a charge against him of disobedience to imperial orders. An investigation took place, but nothing came of it, the authorities deciding that Baranof was not in the government service. These trials, to which must be added disappointments in the result of the fur trade, helped, nevertheless, to embitter the old man's life.

One of the reasons of the varying success of the Russian-American company's operations in those years was the incapacity of its ships' officers. Petroff affirms that seventy-five per cent. of the company's vessels foundered on the Aleutian Islands, several even before they had left the coast of Kamchatka. The clause in the charter permitting the employment of skilled naval officers had not been taken advantage of; and these were the results.

In 1801, two competent Russians, Davidof and Kvostof, obtained permission from the government to enter the service of the company, and immediately set to work to reorganize its shipping. Their efforts were crowned with success; by dint of economy and business methods they succeeded in placing this department on a sounder financial basis.

During the first years of the nineteenth century the affairs of the Russian-American Company took indeed a more prosperous turn. The posts in Southeastern Alaska were increasing in number and in importance. Sixteen had been established along the coast from Unalaska to Sitka, and nearly all mounted with brass three-pounders. The seal rookeries on the Pribilof Islands proved a perfect treasure-house for the company. The Chinese had discovered the process of plucking and dyeing the fur, which gave it its great commercial value; and every year large quantities of precious sealskins made their way down the Pacific to the various Chinese ports. The revenue from the Pribilof islands alone furnished the means of meeting the current expenses without applying to the home government.

The clause in its charter, which obliged the company to keep supply depots at various points of the colony for the home government, proved in practice very annoying and costly. Goods had to be brought overland through Siberia, and then shipped from Okhotsk, thus entailing enormous expense on the company. In 1802, Count Rezanof, chamberlain to the Emperor, and a relative of Shelikof, secured the privilege of

sending supplies from St. Petersburg by sea; and vessels for this purpose were bought in London. Rezanof himself accompanied the first fleet in the double capacity of government inspector of the Russian colonies and special ambassador to Japan. The Japanese mission ultimately proving an utter failure, Rezanof turned his attention to the American coast. After helping to put order in the affairs of the company at Kadiak, he set out for California.

This voyage was the beginning of commercial intercourse between the Russian and the Spanish colonies, which ended with the Russians taking possession of a piece of territory in northern California. The natural resources of that favored land appealed to the practical Rezanof, and he set about obtaining a foothold there. As a preliminary, he engaged himself to marry the daughter of the Spanish commandante at San Francisco, and then wrote to the Czar and the directors of the company, submitting a plan for the extension of Russian dominion to California. He urged the establishment of a farming colony somewhere on the coast above San Francisco, the Spaniards having, at that time, no permanent settlement north of their "presidio." In his

memorial, Rezanof expressed the opinion that it would be next to impossible to find competent farm hands among the Russian hunters and trappers, and he asked that the "patient and industrious Chinese" should be imported in their stead. This proposal, made in 1806, is, according to Petroff, the first on record suggesting Chinese immigration to the Pacific coast.

Rezanof started for St. Petersburg to give the reasons for his Japanese fiasco, and to urge the California plantation. While on his way overland through Siberia, he fell from his horse and sustained injuries which hastened his end. He died at Krasnoyarsk, in March, 1807, and by his death Russia was deprived of another zealous promoter of her interests in the North Pacific.

It was not until four years later, that Baranof undertook to put the California scheme into execution. In 1811, he sent a clever officer, Kushkof, who landed at Bodega Bay, and bought a tract of land from the natives, who asserted their independence of the Spaniards. These latter claimed a title to the whole west coast of America, "by right of discovery," and ordered the Russians to quit the country. Podushkin, the officer in charge, replied that he had no author-

ity to do such a thing, and that both sides should have to wait till Madrid and St. Petersburg had come to an agreement. He proposed that during the interval the Russians and Spaniards should join hands, hunt for sea-otter off the coast of California, and divide the profits. This proposal was officially declined, but privately accepted; and the Russians remained undisturbed on the Bodega plantation.

The object they had in view, however, namely that of providing an unfailing supply of meat and breadstuffs for their Alaskan posts, was never attained. Rezanof had predicted that the Russian hunters and their Aleutian allies would make very poor farmers. His prediction was fulfilled so completely, that Etolin, a successor of Baranof, got rid of the plantation in 1842, and the Russians abandoned California apparently without regret.

The failure of the Bodega scheme obliged Baranof to look elsewhere for supplies for the Russian colony, which, in 1811, numbered about five hundred persons. He continued to extend his intercourse and joint ventures with merchants from several of the New England ports, chiefly from Boston, until, at last, he ended by com-

promising himself. One instance may be given here. An American captain named Bennett sold a cargo of provisions to Baranof at Sitka, and received sealskins in payment at the rate of one dollar each. He then quickly crossed over to Kamchatka and sold the same skins to the company's agents there for three dollars each. This, and deals like this, were promptly reported to the home officials, to whom Baranof was represented as a senile tool in the hands of the shrewd Yankee merchants. The charges were not all true, but they succeeded in undermining the confidence of the Russian-American Company in its manager; and steps were taken to select his successor.

A new scheme of the resourceful Baranof delayed his recall for several years. It was nothing less than the extension of the Russian Empire to the islands of the Pacific. Friendly Boston merchants (*) had brought him into communication with King Kamehameka; and, with the aid of a medical adventurer, Dr. Scheffer, Baranof

(*) Miners have told me that among the Thlinket Indians, in Southeastern Alaska, whitemen are to this day known as "Boston-men." Similarly, on the British side, the Canadians are called "King-George-men," a relic of the Hudson's Bay Company's rule in the days of the Georges.—*E.J.D.*

planned the annexation of the Sandwich Islands. Scheffer sailed for Hawaii, with full power to act for the company. He found Kamehameka fully controlled by the English; so he turned his attention to Tomare, King of Kauai. His medical skill cured the queen of intermittent fever; and he easily succeeded in making Tomare throw off his allegiance to Kamehameka and put himself under the protection of the Russian Emperor. With Aleutian help, Scheffer erected buildings and began to till the land which had been given to him by the king. Meanwhile, correspondence became active between the main parties in the scheme. The good will of the home officials of the Russian-American Company was secured. A magnificent gold-embroidered uniform, a general's helmet and medals galore were sent to Tomare from the court of St. Petersburg. But Russia, fully aware that it could not cope with the English at sea, declined to go further in support of the enterprise.

When King Kamehameka saw the way things were going, he began to take active measures to restore his supremacy over Tomare, who had already banished Scheffer when the reinforcements which had been solemnly promised did not ar-

rive. These had indeed been sent, but two of the company's ships, laden with supplies for Tomare, were lost on the way. The failure of the scheme, and the pecuniary losses attending it, drew down on Baranof the severest censures of the directors, and he was told to await his successor.

Disheartened by his failures, worn out by his constant struggles with savages, and even his own subordinates, who made several attempts to assassinate him, irritated by his troubles with the government and the company's officials in St. Petersburg, Baranof welcomed his recall. Two Russians, Koch and Bornovolokof, were in turn named to succeed him; but the former died in Kamchatka on his way out, and the other lost his life in the wreck of the *Neva*, when almost in sight of Sitka.

It was only in 1817, that Hagemeister finally appeared on the scene to relieve Baranof of his charge as chief manager of the colonies. He did not introduce himself in his real capacity at once, but spent several months in quietly looking over the company's affairs. One day he produced his commission, and ordered Baranof to transfer his command. This the old manager did with ad-

mirable loyalty. Notwithstanding his troubled career and the non-success of many of his plans, his administration had been a fairly profitable one for his company. He turned over to the new manager property far exceeding in value the amounts called for by the company's vouchers. Millions had passed through his hands during his twenty-seven years of service in Alaska; he had enriched many a Russian family; and yet he found himself at the age of eighty, broken in spirit and a poor man. Such is human gratitude! He started on his return voyage to Russia, but on the way he was attacked with malarial fever—some say he was poisoned—and on April 16, 1819, he breathed his last at Batavia, in Java. Thus died the real creator and strongest upholder of Russian interests on the North Pacific coast.

CHAPTER VII

Failure of Russian Enterprise—Transfer of the Territory

THE successors of Baranof followed each other in rapid succession. Hagemeister, Yanovsky, Muraviev, Chistiakof and Baron Wrangell were all men of strong individuality, but they had been trained to military and naval work rather than to commercial affairs.

In 1820, the charter of the Russian-American Company expired, and was renewed for twenty years by the Emperor Alexander I. Not only were all the old privileges confirmed, but even additional ones were granted; and the managers in Alaska were enabled to extend their explorations northward and into the interior, a work which they had hitherto not attempted. Bering Sea and the American coast of the Arctic, which had been neglected for the more profitable regions of Southeastern Alaska, were visited by several exploring parties. Two skilled Russian navigators, Etolin and Kromchenko, returned from the north with much valuable information. The German, von Kotzebue, in his brig *Rurik*, had already preceded them up through Bering Strait as far as Cape Lisburne.

Under Muraviev's administration the southeastern boundary lines of the colony were fixed. A treaty was concluded between Russia and the United States, April 17, 1824, and with England, February 28, 1825, "designating Prince of Wales Island, in lat. 54° 40′ north, and between long. 131° and 133° west of Greenwich, as the southerly boundary of the Russian possessions; and as their easterly boundary, a line running from the head of Portland canal northward along the summit of the coast range of mountains to a point where it intersects the fifty-sixth degree of latitude; from thence the line running to the Arctic ocean along the one hundred and forty-first meridian." It is the interpretation of this document which caused friction in recent years between Canada and the United States. A clause of the treaty between England and Russia gave the latter country a strip of land which should never be wider than ten marine leagues from the ocean coast. During the Alaska purchase negotiations, the United States interpreted this clause in a liberal manner for itself, and followed all the windings and sinuosities of the mainland, as if the shores of the inlets and arms of the ocean—for instance, Lynn canal—

could be called ocean coast. Canada rejected this interpretation, and claimed that the ten marine leagues should count from the main continental coast. The question was submitted to the Alaskan Boundary Commissioners, who decided against the Canadian contention ; and there the matter rests.

When Chistiakof became manager of the colony, in 1827, he continued the work of exploration. One of his officers, captain Lutke, compiled an atlas of the Alaskan coast and islands, and subsequently published a book descriptive of the country.

Baron Wrangell took up the reins of government in 1831, at a time when the Hudson's Bay Company was very active along the Pacific coast. The Russian and the English having the same object in view, their interests frequently clashed ; and both were many a time on the verge of open rupture. The chief bone of contention was the Stakeen River. The mouth of this river ran through Russian possessions; while the Hudson's Bay Company, having posts on its headwaters, claimed the privilege of supplying them through the Stakeen, without interference from the Russians. This Wrangell

would not admit. The Russians knew they could not compete with the Hudson's Bay people, who possessed the richer fur districts in the interior, and they determined to crush their rivals by starving them out. Wrangell built a redoubt at the mouth of the Stakeen, and fired on several of the British ships which attempted to carry supplies up the river. Russian schooners patrolled the coast, with orders from Wrangell to seize all vessels belonging to the English company. Unpleasant complications were threatening, when the cool heads of both monopolies suggested a settlement by arbitration. Baron Wrangell was censured by his government for the drastic measures he had taken, and was ordered to Hamburg, where he met Sir George Simpson and a commission of the Hudson's Bay Company. An amicable arrangement was arrived at, the chief clauses being restriction as to hunting-grounds and the lease of the strip of disputed territory along the Stakeen to the Hudson's Bay Company for an annual tribute of otter-skins.

In 1836, Kuprianof succeeded Wrangell and signalised his administration more by exploration than by fur-hunting. He sent pioneer parties along the Arctic coast and up the Yukon,

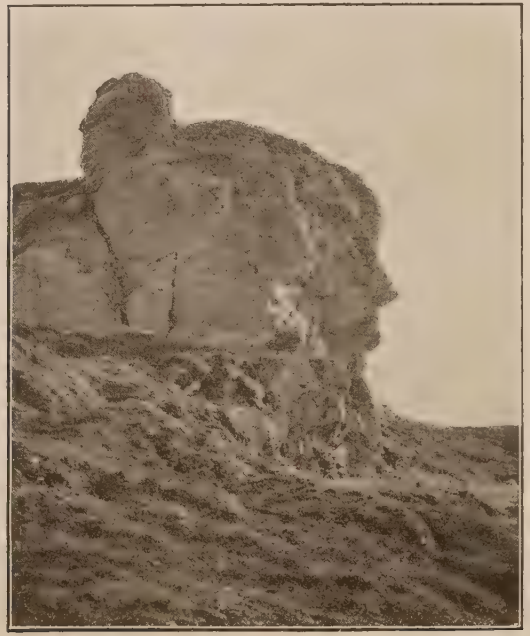
then known as the Kuikhpak. Lieutenant Tebenof built a fort on St. Michael's Island, in the delta of that mighty river. Kashevarof reached Point Barrow, seven hundred miles north of Nome. Malakof and Glazunof explored the valleys of the Kuskokwim and Nushagak. Malakof went up the Yukon as far as Nulato, but the hostile attitude of the Tinneh tribe prevented his further progress. The natives even destroyed the station which the Russians had built at that point.

A smallpox epidemic appeared in the colony in 1836, and raged for nearly four years. Petroff tells us that among the native children and the Russian half-breeds, the mortality was inconsiderable, whereas nearly all the old and middle-aged people, especially among the Thlinkets, fell victims to the disease. In Sitka, four hundred deaths occurred, and on the Island of Kadiak, seven hundred and thirty. Along the coast eastward from Cook's Inlet, five hundred were attacked by the dread malady, of whom over two hundred died.

This fearful visitation left the colony in a crippled condition. Whole villages were on the verge of starvation, and the natives wandered from

place to place in search of better hunting and fishing grounds. When Etolin succeeded to the chief-managership, in 1840, he partially solved the problem of feeding them. He brought the scattered remnants together, established large villages, and made the chiefs responsible for the gathering of food supplies and the maintenance of store-houses, a measure which succeeded well enough on the Aleutian Islands and in the coastal settlements.

The second term of the Russian-American charter expired in 1841, and was renewed only in 1844. The government took three years to deliberate over some of its clauses, but the rights and privileges of the company were renewed and even augmented. The colonial system of government, heretofore centred in one man, was modified by the establishment of a council, composed of an assistant chief manager and two or three naval officers stationed in the colony. This council, whose functions were rather advisory than executive, unfortunately did not prove a strong factor in the commercial affairs of Aliaska-land. Baron Wrangell's administration had let the expenses of the company exceed the income. The heaviest drain on him had been the payment of salaries



THE SPHINX OF OPHIR

AN OPHIR CREEK MINER

to aged and infirm employees who were no longer able to serve the company. A remedy was devised for this by pensioning off all faithful servants whose usefulness was gone, and by fixing them on homesteads.

The second great source of expense and wasted energy was the Russian mania for exploration, a mania that ultimately proved fatal to the company itself. The presence of naval officers in the advisory council had an unlooked-for effect. The men selected were good officers but inferior merchants. Instead of trying to make money for their company by traffic in furs, they turned their attention to shipbuilding and mining. "The shipyard at Sitka," writes Petroff, "was as complete as any similar establishment in the Russian empire, being provided with all kinds of workshops and foundries, including one for the making of nautical instruments. Experiments were made in the manufacture of brick and woodenware, while new material was imported from California for the manufacture of woollen stuffs. For all these enterprises skilled labor had to be brought from Russia at great expense, which circumstance will sufficiently explain the failure attending the attempts. Vast sums were

also wasted in endeavors to extract iron from a very inferior grade of ore found in various sections of the country. The only real advantage the company ever reaped from its many workshops in Sitka, was the manufacture of agricultural implements for the ignorant and indolent rancheros of California, thousands of plowshares of a very primitive pattern being made at Sitka for the Californian and Mexican markets. Axes, hatchets, spades and hoes, were also turned out by the industrious workmen of the Sitka shipyard, while the foundry was for some time engaged in casting bells for the Catholic missions on the Pacific coast. Many of these bells are still in existence, and bear witness to an early, though perhaps abnormal, development of industry on that northern coast."

Events proved that this development was abnormal. The energies of the company were turned from fur-hunting, its primary source of revenue, to other commercial side-issues and to costly explorations of the interior of the vast country.

Chroniclers have much greater reason to think well of this policy of development than had the shareholders of the Russian-American Company;

it has given them a good many documents of great historic interest. The most successful of the explorers, in the middle of the last century was Lieutenant Zagoskin. In 1842, he journeyed along Norton Sound and crossed overland to the Yukon. In the winter of 1843, he went up to Nulato, and made an unsuccessful attempt to reach Kotzebue Sound. In the spring, he advanced one hundred miles above Nulato. Owing to the threatening attitude of the natives, he turned back and crossed over the tundra to Ikogmute, on the Kuskowim. In 1844, he established himself at Redoubt Kalmakovsky, on the same river, and thoroughly explored the surrounding country before he returned to Sitka. Zagoskin has described these travels in a volume which is replete with interesting details of the home life and customs of the native tribes he fell in with, in the Eskimo and Athabaskan regions.

Etolin's successor, Tebenof, to whom hydrography is indebted for one of the best coast maps of Alaska ever published, continued the policy of his immediate predecessors. He brought the colonial fleet to a high state of effectiveness, but he knew nothing of the fur trade, and did no more for it than those who preceded him; and as a conse-

quence, the shares of the company continued to decline in value.

The discovery of gold in California, in 1848, again brought Russia into contact with Spanish-America, and gave a fresh impulse to trade. Those were the days when the Pacific coast was reached by sailing around the Horn; and the Russian stores at Sitka, and on Kadiak Island, were practically the nearest supply depots. Tebenof shipped tons of shopworn, unsaleable goods that had lain for years in the company's warehouses in Alaska, and sold them to the miners at a large profit. Other commodities continued to be sent south, such as ice and coal, salt fish and timber, and a lucrative trade sprang up on the Pacific.

In 1851, Tebenof was relieved by Rosenberg as head of the Russian colony. This manager was preparing to extend the Pacific trade still further, when the Crimean war broke out and reduced to a mere nothing a commerce which stood in continual danger of being interfered with by English vessels.

The representatives of the Russian-American and Hudson's Bay Companies met in London, where they drew up a agreement of neutrality; and intercolonial traffic went on as usual. During

that disastrous war, which involved a large portion of Europe, the North Pacific was not wholly free from hostilities. Skirmishes took place here and there between the belligerent parties, while British cruisers captured seven of the Russian ships. One of these, the *Sitka*, fell into the enemy's hands only at the end of a successful voyage around the world. "She had escaped the notice of all the English squadrons scouring the oceans," writes Petroff, "when at length in the vicinity of the Kamchatkan coast, she was hailed by a frigate and obliged to surrender." During the war, several encounters took place on the Siberian coast between the Russia and the allied fleets, notably in the unsuccessful attack made by the English and French ships on the harbor of Petropaulovsk.

In all these years, strange to say, whaling had never entered into the programme of the Russian-American Company, although New England had profited largely by this industry. As far back as 1841, fifty ships from Boston and New Bedford roamed over Bering Sea and the Arctic, every year, and returned home, at the end of the season, laden with blubber and whalebone. It was the whalers' custom to land in the Aleutian Islands,

and "try out," that is, melt and boil the fresh blubber, a practice which finally became a nuisance, as the smoke and stench drove the precious sea-otter away. Tebenof and his immediate successors, Rosenberg and Voievodsky, more than once suggested to the Russians to go into the whaling business themselves as the best means of putting down their American rivals. These suggestions were acted upon in 1850, when a charter was granted to a number of shareholders of the company, under the title of the "Russian-Finland-Whaling Company." For several years ships, manned by Russians and Finns, scoured the North Pacific and Arctic, with but indifferent success. The new company's interests were too closely united with the older one, which was becoming more and more embarassed every year.

Voievodsky's administration was marked by the same extravagance as that of his predecessors, the revenues of the colony were being frittered away in useless explorations or in barren efforts to foster valueless industries. The Russian-American Company was running deeply into debt ; and while desirous of continuing its operations, it endeavored to transfer to the imperial government

the expense of maintaining imperial authority in Alaska. The Crimean war had drained Russia to such an extent that the home government would not entertain the proposal.

However, as a preliminary to some action or other, two state officials, Kostlivitzof and Golovin, were sent to Alaska to inspect the company's affairs. They compiled voluminous reports, but their work only mystified the imperial senate and the ministry of commerce. It was impossible to reconcile the interests of the company's and those of the government; and the affair rested there.

In 1859, Voievodsky was succeeded by Furnhelm, during whose term of office the charter of the company expired. No renewal was granted, nor indeed was any asked for. In fact, negotiations were begun between Secretary Seward and the ambassador of the Czar, at Washington, for the transfer of the Russian possessions in America to the United States.

The civil war put an end to negociations for a time, but with the restoration of peace in 1865, the question was taken up again. A very determined opposition was made in Congress to the acquisition of Alaska. One representative from

Missouri said in a speech that the acquisition of this inhospitable and barren waste would never add one dollar to the wealth of the country or furnish homes for its people. To suppose, that "any one would willingly leave the mild climate and fruitful soil of the United States, with its newspapers and churches, its railways and commerce, its civilization and refinement, to seek a home in Alaska, is to suppose such a person insane." Another congressman declared that "no man, except one insane enough to buy the earthquakes of the West Indies and the icefields of Greenland, could be found to agree to any other terms for the acquisition of Alaska to the United States than its acceptance as a free gift." Still another called it "an inhospitable, wretched, God-forsaken region, worth nothing, but a positive injury and incumbrance as a colony to the United States."

After a long debate in Congress, and in spite of opposition which was both fierce and strong, the cession of the present territory, eleven hundred miles long and eight hundred wide, more extensive indeed than the thirteen original States of the Union, with California thrown in, and having moreover a coast-line of thirty-one thousand

miles, which is thus longer than the coast-line of the United States, was made over to the Republic for the sum of $7,200,000.

The true inwardness of the international deal whereby a big slice of this continent was turned over to the United States, has, I believe, never been given to the public. A couple of years ago, the New York papers published an article purporting to give the motives of what was described as a fine piece of diplomatic jugglery. I give here the substance of the article, without vouching for its accuracy. When the British government demanded the immediate release of Mason and Slidell, during the civil war, a Russian fleet of seven vessels, whether by accident or design, dropped anchor off Cape Charles and Henry. The legend has it that the Russian admiral notified President Lincoln that the fleet was at his disposal. Fortunately, its services were not required; but when General Grant became president it was determined to reward Russia for her good will during the "dark days of the war," and for the expenses she might have incurred in maintaining a fleet in American waters. The most delicate way of carrying out the intention, without wounding British susceptibilities, was to vote a

sum in open Congress and take over Alaska, which the Russian government had begun to look upon, in recent years, as a sort of white elephant on its hands.

The ceremony of the transfer was held at Sitka, in October, 1867. American and Russian war-ships were drawn up in line; General Rousseau acting as commissioner for the United States and Prince Maksutof, the military governor, filling the same office for the Russians. "With the roll of drums," writes Petroff, "and the discharge of musketry, the imperial eagle of Russia descended, and the Stars and Stripes rose into the murky atmosphere of an Alaskan autumn day. The Princess Maksutof wept at the spectacle, and Nature seemed to keep her company, drenching to the skin all the participants in the ceremony. The native Indians, in their canoes, witnessed it from a distance, listening stolidly to the booming of the cannon, and gazing with indifference upon the descending and ascending flags. Of the nature of the proceedings they had but a faint and imperfect conception. But one thing they did realize: that the country they once imagined themselves to own, was now being transferred to a strange people."

After the transfer, the Russians were allowed two years to wind up their business and to take home to Europe all who wished to return. The Americans soon made their presence felt in their newly-acquired territory. In less than a week after the flags were exchanged, several new stores were built at Sitka, besides two ten-pin alleys, drinking saloons, and restaurants. All sorts and conditions of men flocked thither, pioneers and squatters, aspirants for political honors and emoluments. "Before the first sunset gun was fired," continues the official report, "preemption stakes dotted the ground; the air was full of rumors of framing a city charter, creating laws and remuneratives offices; and it was not long before an election was held for town officials, at which over a hundred votes were polled for nearly as many candidates."

The Russian population looked on in wonder at this new activity. They were startled at the innovations, but with true Russian hospitality, they welcomed the newcomers. Officials and laborers of the old regime opened their doors to them, a privilege which was shamefully abused. Robberies and assaults became the order of the day, until at last the peaceable inhabitants were

compelled to lock their doors at nightfall, not daring to move about till the bugle sounded in the morning. It was the hoodlum vanguard that had come to reap the first fruits of American domination in Alaska. Fortunately, the presence of soldiery prevented any great excesses; law and order soon made themselves felt not only in Sitka but along the coast, where, during the past thirty-five years, American enterprise, as exemplified in the great commercial companies, has extended itself to fisheries and furs, and in recent years, to mining.

Few acquisitions made by the United States have turned out so profitably for that nation. From 1871 to 1900 inclusively, the Federal treasury received from the leasing of the seal islands alone $7,607,820, a sum larger than that paid for the whole territory. During the same period, the Alaskan forests and mines yielded profits amounting to $40,000,000; the fisheries and fur trade, $100,000,000. The last six years have shown that Alaska has only begun to open up its wealth. The latest discovery has been the gold placer beds on the shore of Bering Sea, near Nome.

CHAPTER VIII

The Bering Coast—Placer Mining—A Trip to the Arctic

WE sighted Nome at nine o'clock on the evening of July 12. Three hours later, the good ship *Roanoke* dropped anchor in front of the town, a couple of miles from the shore. It was midnight. but still broad daylight: we were in the Land of the Midnight Sun. The houses and tents over yonder were the famous mining camp. I could hear the surf beating wildly against the desolate-looking beach, and hushing to sleep the weary miners, among whom, for two years to come, I was to live, and work, and try to raise their minds and hearts to things less perishable than gold.

The Bering sea has the reputation among sailors of quickly lashing itself into a fury strong enough to keep any one from landing on its beach. That is what it did for us. Just as we were ready to go ashore, the light wind stiffened into a gale, which set the surf a-rolling in on the sand with deafening roars ; and we had the privilege, if such it was, of viewing Nome from the *Roanoke* during more than forty-eight hours of uninterrupted daylight.

From the sea, the town looked quite respectable. Houses, cabins, tents, large and small, extended for a couple of miles along the beach. Large commercial warehouses, recognized by their lofty lightering-derricks, stood prominently in the foreground; behind them rose the hotels and stores and other buildings; while, beyond these and towering high above everything else, appeared the Catholic church whose lofty spire, tipped with a golden cross, gave such a civilized and homelike air to this scene in the Far Northland, that my first impressions of Nome were decidedly favorable. Here was surely not a mining-camp, hardly three years old, but a good-sized city.

It was a startling experience, when one stepped ashore at last, to find oneself on a street planked from side to side, and lined with wholesale and retail stores, hotels, banks, and official buildings; to hear newsboys crying out the daily papers, and to see telephone and electric light wires strung overhead. Some one suggested that all the town needed now were the trolley-cars and a university.

Nome takes its name from a cape fifteen miles down the coast, and owes its existence to the tremendous inrush of miners in 1900. The town is built on the spot where the miners landed, at

the mouth of Snake River, and, when examined closely, is really only one long street, with a few small cross and parallel streets here and there, to relieve the pressure of the population.

There are hills in the background, four or five miles away; and the tundra, which lies between them and the beach, is covered with Arctic moss and grass of a dull yellowish and brown color. The moss, which resembles white coral, creeps close to the ground, but the grass grows in tufts, sometimes a foot or two in height. These tufts are hard and round, and make walking almost impossible. They are the "nigger-heads," so well known in Alaska, and so thoroughly detested by prospectors who have to trudge—or "mush", as they call it here—over the tundra. The whole aspect of this section of the country is one of barrenness and desolation, which is scarcely relieved by the fact that not a tree grows within a radius of seventy-five miles from Nome.

Several small rivers flow through the hills southward into Bering Sea; one of them, the Snake River, cutting Nome in two. The valleys of those streams are broad, and were undoubtedly the beds of large rivers in former ages. Gravel and sand brought down from the hill-sides to

those old channels, are found in various thicknesses under a few feet of decayed moss and grass; and there placer gold lies in considerable quantities. It was the discovery of auriferous gravel, in 1898, which gave, and is still giving, importance to Nome, and, in fact, to the whole of Northwestern Alaska.

Gold was known to exist along this Bering coast long before 1898. The only whitemen who ever visited these latitudes were American whalers and Russians, and in later years, the men of the United States revenue service. These, I learned, had often found indications of gold in the beach-sands; but the great discovery of 1898, like many similar ones, was the result of mere chance, and had not the faintest element of romance about it.

In July of that year, three miners left Chinik, the Swedish mission, on Golovin Bay, eighty miles east of Nome, to look for gold quartz along the northwest coast. When they reached the Snake River, a heavy Bering gale suddenly overtook them, washing their little schooner ashore. While waiting for the storm to blow over, the three men prospected up along Snake River and one of its tributaries, Anvil Creek.

PROSPECTOR "PANNING" FOR GOLD

"PANNING" FOR GOLD IN WINTER

In both places they found placer gold. They returned to Golovin Bay, without having taken the precaution of securing legal rights over their claims by staking them. It was their ignorance of the mining laws, or their desire to keep their discovery to themselves — they never said which —that made them lose the richest placer claims yet found in that part of Alaska. For some one gave the hint to three Swedes, Lindbloom, Lindberg and Bryneston, names now well-known in Nome, who sailed up to Snake River, staked all the property and left the original finders out in the cold. When the miner who told me this story had concluded, I ventured to remark that that was a pretty mean transaction on the part of the Swedes. He replied: "Oh! that's nothing! We're in Alaska, you know! You'll see worse tricks than that, if you stay in this country long."

The discovery of those placer beds was the forerunner of other finds more important still. Gold was found in the following spring on Nome beach, and in such quantities that experts have admitted that all the beach-diggings in the world grouped together could not compare with the sands of the Bering coast.

When the news of the Nome discoveries reached the outside world, the Klondike fever was at its height. On my way from Revelstoke to Rossland, in 1899, I met a miner who had just had a letter from a friend telling him to drop immediately any position he held, were it even a governorship, and take the first steamer for Nome. That was the first time I heard a name which has since become a by-word in the mining world, as common as Klondike itself, and which has given Alaska an importance the country never had before.

On August 5th, 1899, four hundred miners, hailing from the Yukon, from the Klondike region, or from Seattle, were gathering in gold from the beach sands. Five days later, there were a thousand at work "panning," and averaging an ounce of dust a day, or sixteen dollars a man. By October, two thousand miners had pitched their tents in one unbroken line along the beach. Gold was found a few feet below the surface, and for the mere rocking, began to yield from five to seventy dollars a day; many men making as high as a hundred. Three miners took out nine thousand dollars in three days from a hole four feet by twelve; they made

thirty-two thousand dollars in forty days. During that short season of 1898, nearly two million dollars were taken from the sands of Nome.

This news soon spread to the world outside, but the cold Arctic winter kept the outside world at bay. It was reserved for the spring of 1900 to witness a sight rarely seen in a life-time. The fame of Nome had become so great that the mining centres of the world simply stampeded northward. People rushed in from every clime; even Africa and Australia sent their contingents. Scores of steamers, coming from San Francisco or Seattle, were gorged with gold-seekers. Four thousand men landed on the beach in one day. Before the summer was half over, thirty thousand people, men and women, were camped at Nome, rocking and panning for gold. The beach was literally covered for miles with Swedes, Dutch, Japanese, Irish, Scotch, French, English, and a dozen nationalities besides. So dense was the crowd, that a miner told me he had to pay a neighbor of his the sum of two dollars to move a canoe, so as to give him room to pitch his tent.

The one ambition of those motley thousands was to gather in the yellow dust as quickly as

possible, and then to get out of the country just as quickly. That was their ambition; but they failed to count with fickle fortune. Large sums of money were, indeed, taken out, many miners securing independence; but the greater number came out of the fray as rich as the traditional church-mouse. The gold-yield of the Nome beach dwindled down, and thousands of disappointed fortune-seekers clamored for the means to take them out of that Arctic ice-trap.

Those were the commercial results of the summer, but the demoralizing effects on the miners were just as disastrous. The year 1900 will be known in Nome annals as the year of the "big stampede"; and if the tales that I had to listen to there are, half of them, true, the scenes on the beach during that year must have beggared description. Thirty thousand men, and not a few women, of all classes and nations, dragged thither by greedy transportation companies, were dumped out on a coast nearly three thousand miles from white civilization. No provision had been made for the preservation of order; and as many disreputable characters and cut-throats had found their way thither with the miners, they made their presence felt in various

and disagreeable ways. The canvas city of Nome was alive with gambling-sharks and whiskey-sellers who pocketed the miners' gold-dust without panning for it. Discontent and disappointment grew as the season advanced; and the fear of having to begin the eight months of an Alaskan winter, without food or shelter, drove many to acts of desperation, as the little cemetery down by the beach testifies. Plundering, and other deeds of violence, became so frequent that martial law had to be proclaimed. In the end, a certain amount of order was brought out of chaos; but the Government of the United States had to send transport ships to take back to civilization thousands of sadder but wiser men. And thus ended the Odyssey of 1900.

All the miners did not leave the country, however. There were among them many old "sourdoughs" from Montana and California, and disgruntled Klondikers, who had come from Dawson, nineteen hundred miles up the Yukon, and who wisely reasoned that since so much gold had been found in the beach-sands, there must plainly be much more left on the hill-sides yonder, and in the many creeks running down into the Bering Sea. The discovery of placers on the

Snake River and on Anvil Creek brought conviction to their minds, and they began to spread out in skirmishing order to sink holes along the hundreds of creeks and gulches draining Seward Peninsula.

This peninsula, in which Nome and its interests are centred, is called after the statesman who worked so successfully to make Alaska a colony of the United States. It is the irregular land mass projecting from the western coast of Alaska westward to within forty-six miles of Asia, from which it is separated by the Bering Strait. It lies between the Bering Sea and the Arctic Ocean, and is itself cut off from the rest of the continent on the south by Norton Sound, a deep indentation of Bering Sea, and on the north by Kotzebue Sound, an inlet of the Arctic Ocean. Seward Peninsula was a lone, barren, valueless land until the gold rush, six years ago, when prospectors began to climb its hills and cross its tundra, giving a name and a value to every creek and channel.

"Prospecting," in the miner's vocabulary, means hunting for precious metals, but in Alaska it means something more. To realize this one has but to see those men trudging out from Nome,

laden like beasts of burden, with tents and bedding, and a food-supply for months. I have seen miners starting out with bundles on their backs that looked as big as healthy baby elephants. Those expeditions would be easy enough if beaten trails were followed; but tramping over beaten trails is precisely what prospectors may not do. Their terminus is always some new creek or hill, into which no one has ever sunk a pick or shovel; for their success lies in discovering new placers or quartz-ledges. These being the conditions, the physical sufferings of prospecting miners are naturally very severe. They often lose themselves among the hills in summer, and oftener still, get frozen in the dreadful Alaskan blizzards. I have frequently conversed with bronzed old miners, and listened to heart-rending stories of destitution, and graphic accounts of the despair which seizes them when they are astray among the hills, and see death by starvation staring them in the face.

One case I recall as I write, of three men who were lost and starving in the neighborhood of Teller. When all their food was gone, they subsisted for several days on their buffalo-robes and boot-legs. When these gave out, one man ac-

tually died of starvation, and the other two were mustering up courage to eat of his flesh, when happily they were rescued.

Besides death by starvation, many miners lose their lives by drowning or freezing. Sooner or later they are found by other miners; but there is a sad aspect to their fate. Men are mostly strangers to each other in Alaska. In a mining-camp, for obvious reasons, it is not considered good form to ask a man who he is, or where he came from. So that it too often happens that when dead men are found on trails, or lying on the beach, no one knows who they are or anything about them. Sometimes they are buried on the spot where they are found; sometimes, when it is not far and does not entail too much trouble, they are brought to some centre of population. In the cemetery at Nome there are several graves of men whose identity will never be known. Charitable hands have raised a cross or a slab over their remains; but the words "Unknown," or "Found drowned," or "Found on the trail," is a melancholy epitaph to put over a grave when you are morally certain that in desolate homes, somewhere in the outside world, there are mothers, or wives, or children,

shedding anxious tears over the continued silence of loved ones in Alaska. I had some sad duties to perform in this respect during my first few months in Alaska; and I know, alas! that the silence of several absent miners will not be broken on this side of the grave. But the greed for gold is something that these lesser tragedies of life cannot stifle, and in Alaska, as elsewhere, when one man drops there are others to take his place.

The work of prospecting inland for placer-beds was begun in earnest in the spring of 1901, and from the beginning, success crowned the efforts of the miners. Results have shown that there is gold in all the creeks of Seward Peninsula. The beds of ancient rivers — and there are many such up there — filled with shifting gravel and erosions from the hillsides, are being thoroughly inspected, and usually turn out very rich, every hillside hitherto touched with the pick and shovel yielding gold dust in more or less paying quantities. Notwithstanding the limited number of the miners, and the shortness of the working season, less than five months, five million dollars in gold-dust have been washed out of the Seward Peninsula every year since the discovery.

There is, however, one drawback to placer mining in that country. Individual miners, who have so far had the Peninsula to themselves, have learned by experience that single-handed they cannot fight against the climate and the short season. Four months out of twelve is the limit of a miner's activity; the other eight are spent in forced idleness. Capital, therefore, is needed to develop the claims on a large scale, and to work them out quickly. Just as soon as capitalists awake to the possibilities of that wonderful country, a period of tremendous activity and corresponding prosperity will surely set in.

And still it is the solitary miner, with his pan and shovel, his tent and outfit, who prowls about the hills and discovers the gold. One of the symptoms of the gold fever is the desire to go prospecting for the metal, the farther away the better. Since 1900, the whole of Seward Peninsula has been tramped over a dozen times from Norton Bay to Kotzebue Sound. There are many streams draining it northward into the Arctic, notably the Kougarok, Imnachuk, and Keewalik. The Keewalik has several tributaries, one of which is Candle Creek. Promising placer

mines were discovered there in 1902, and, as usual, there was a stampede to stake claims and form a camp.

Camp formation in Alaska is not a very complicated work,—a few tents, a couple of general stores and eating houses, ten or twelve saloons, each furnished with its gambling outfit, and that is all. Gambling is apparently an inseparable adjunct of a mining camp. This has been true of Nome since the in-rush of 1900, and particularly so since the Canadian authorities closed all the gambling-dens in Dawson, three years ago. When the order from Ottawa was put in force, the whole gambling fraternity, with their wheels, faro banks, crap tables and other paraphernalia, shook the Klondike dust from off their feet, and sailed down the Yukon to Nome. There they found plenty of people waiting and willing to be victimized. It is over the crap table, or faro bank, that fools and their money part company in Alaska. Thousands of dollars in gold dust and nuggets, the profits of a hard season's labor, go in a few minutes from the miner's "poke" to the gambler's pocket; and strange as it may seen, there are always more victims than can be accomodated.

Candle Creek was in the full enjoyment of these privileges of advanced civilization when I made a visit there—my first missionary trip outside Nome—up through Bering Strait and into Kotzebue Sound. The vessel which carried us, the *Saidie*, was a small round-bottomed tug-boat. Being built with paddle-wheels for towing service on the shallow waters of the Yukon, she rolled like a log in the Arctic; and all on board grew deadly seasick. This was the third visit I had from that dreaded enemy in six months. I had paid tribute to Neptune in the Atlantic; again in the Pacific. It was now the turn of the Arctic. If some unlooked-for accident had taken me to the Antarctic, my circle of misery would have been complete.

The sleeping-berths on the *Saidie* were built round a room which served for dining-hall, card-table, etc., and when the time came to retire, we had to pack ourselves away in tiers like bales of cotton in a country store. An accommodating steward gave me a middle berth, which was neither too high nor too low; on the Arctic, one accepts a middle berth as he does a lower Pullman on the prairies. Below me was a Laplander who had charge of the government reindeer at some

northern station. Above me was an old miner from Southern California, who, however well he could stand the earthquakes of his native soil, was not proof against the rolling and heaving of the Arctic.

On our way north, we stopped at Teller, on Port Clarence, a small harbor, which had been in former years, and is still, in fact, a favorite haven of refuge for Arctic whalers; it is also a port of traffic, for the rich Gold Run and Bluestone placer country.

We were rather unlucky in our passage through Bering Strait. The weather was hazy and disagreeable, and there was no sight of Asia to be had. But we got a reasonably clear view of Cape Prince of Wales, the extreme westerly point of the American mainland. I was now seven thousand miles from Cape Spear, Newfoundland, and I had completed my trip across widest America.

The lofty promontory jutting out into the strait, surrounded at the base by a low level sandspit, resembles in many details the old rock on which Quebec is built. Everything is there to remind you of the Laurentian city, the king's bastion, the terrace, the plains, etc. Kinegan, a native

village of Mahlamutes, at the base of the promontory, completes the picture.

There is a mission of some sect or other at work among the Mahlamutes at the Cape, but if we are to believe the reports of miners and revenue service men, the conversion of those heathen Eskimos holds a secondary place, when compared with the traffic in furs and ivory. The last incumbent, I learned, retired from active missionary labor there, with a fortune to his credit. When I expressed surprise at that kind of zeal, I was told it was worth a fortune to live in such a land and so far away from the blessings of civilization.

We followed the American coast not too closely, passed Schismareff Inlet, crossed the Arctic Circle and sailed round Cape Espenberg on our way to Kotzebue Sound. The sound is a portion of the Arctic, and is almost an inland sea. The waves in it were so fierce and choppy that the *Saidie* had to run for shelter behind Chamisso Island and lie to for fifteen hours. This delay gave us the opportunity we were looking for of visiting some Russian and British monuments on the island, commemorating the visits of exploring vessels from 1828 to 1848. We also

met with a couple of newly-made mounds over poor whalers who will wait in their frozen graves, cheating worms and dissolution, till the day of judgment.

Kotzebue and Chamisso are names which recall a period of active exploration in Arctic waters during the Russian domination. Our skipper, Capt. Rickmers, gave me many details about those two men. August von Kotzebue was a German writer and naturalist, who did extensive travelling in the first quarter of the last century. He discovered the sound in 1816, and returned to Germany, where he was murdered by a student in 1819. Adalbert Chamisso was also a German naturalist and poet, who joined a scientific expedition around the world in 1818. The names of these two distinguished Germans are living things up in the Arctic; but not one of us besides the skipper knew anything about the men who once bore them. Such is fame!

Captain Rickmers, besides being a well-read man, was one of the most communicative and interesting fellow-travellers it has been my lot to meet. He is still quite young, a native of Heligoland, but he has knocked about this planet a great deal. He makes it a rule of his life, a very

commendable one, to learn all about a new country, historically, topographically and otherwise, whenever he visits it. This is his secret; and what he does not know about the Bering and Arctic coasts may be discarded as useless lore. Facts and dates fall from his lips in a wondrous way, rendering my voyage to Keewalik and Candle Creek both pleasant and instructive.

When the storm abated, the *Saidie* steamed out from behind Chamisso Islands while a Dane and an Eskimo came in a lugger to pilot us into Keewalik harbor. From there to Candle mining camp I had twelve miles to cover in a gasoline barge, the *Keewalik Flyer*, which, by the way, was very slow. It took us four or five hours to make the trip through the tortuous, shallow Keewalik; and one morning at five o'clock, my portable chapel and I were put ashore in the mud, in the midst of a drenching shower of rain. I was wet quite through, and I did not know which way to turn. There were a few substantial log cabins and several canvas tents built along the water's edge; there were others on the tundra in the rear; but everything in the camp was in a primitive state. It was still early

SLUICING IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF NOME

MINERS ENJOYING A FRIENDLY GAME

morning; so I sat down on a log, an object of platonic interest to a couple of Eskimos who were passing in their kaiaks, and waited until I saw a sign of life somewhere. Presently smoke came puffing out of a tent near by. I went over and knocked at the canvas door. My surprise was great when the welcome "Come" fell on my ears in the richest of Milesian accents. Here, under the shadow of the Arctic Circle, was a woman from Donegal, who had come to gather nuggets in one of the frozen fastnessses of Alaska.

"And why did you take to mining?" I asked her, later in the day. She did not keep me long waiting for an answer.

"Because," said she, "taking gold from the ground is taking what belongs to nobody but God. He gives it to us direct; and this is the honestest way of making a living,"

Before I left Kotzebue Sound, I met both sons and daughters of Ireland, an object lesson of the ubiquity of the race which is doing so much to Catholicise the four quarters of the globe. The Irish are numerous in Alaska, but so are the Swedes, and Germans, and Finns, and French, and a dozen other races, all differing in every characteristic except their craving for gold.

I learned only when I reached Candle Creek that I had ill chosen my time for a missionary visit to the camp. Rain had been pouring down three days continuously, and had washed out all the sluice-dams on the creek for twenty miles or more. This was a misfortune no one was expecting; in the present moment it was a catastrophe; for it meant the almost total loss of the season's work. Under the circumstances losing an hour to go to Mass, or to hear an instruction, is an item which is not down on an Alaskan miner's programme, especially when he sees his sluice-boxes floating down the stream; so I had to restrict my ministry to the few unemployed who were in the camp.

The fruit was meagre; but I trust my visit was not entirely useless. I had the consolation of offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the first time it was ever offered in that distant part of the Arctic shore. This is one of the souvenirs that grow precious with age. I also gave an instruction to the few present. Among the listeners, besides a couple of natives and the Catholics, were half a dozen Protestants. But the most of my hearers made no claim to any form of religion; they came merely to listen.

It is pathetic to witness the ignorance of those rugged, old gold-miners in matters of religion, and their utter indifference when one offers them substantial soul-food. One would imagine that the isolation of Alaskan camp-life, and the dangers miners are exposed to, would make them reflect sometimes on their responsibilities and on the end of things; but miners, as a rule, are not much addicted to reflection. They listen to what you have to say, but rarely does anything come of it. The limited time one has to stay in a camp puts any attempt at class instruction out of the question.

The *Saidie* had gone back to Nome on a second trip; and while awaiting her return, I spent a whole week in utter inactivity, barring the efforts I made during the cold nights to keep myself warm. When I left Nome, the weather was delightful; and my inexperience of conditions in the Arctic was the only reason why I started out without having made a provision of necessary clothing and furs. But it is by such inadvertencies that one learns how to live.

Newcomers in Alaska are always criticising the dress of the Eskimo, which, in truth, has nothing picturesque about it; but a week under

a canvas tent on Kotzebue Sound would do more to convince a sceptic of the wisdom of the Eskimo than a volume of essays. When the cold and wind come in through the seams and under the sides of your tent, when the water beside your cot freezes half an inch thick in the middle of August, you begin to take serious views of life. It was a sight fit to make the angels smile to see an inexperienced missionary twisting and turning during five nights, searching in vain for the warm side of the blanket. Rest there is none, of course; and one does a great deal of thinking in those long hours about the eternal unfitness of some things, and how little one half the world know what efforts the other half is making to—sleep. A miner from San Francisco, who shared the tent with me, and who also suffered from the cold, wanted to know there and then, in language bristling with epithets, why the United States government did not seize the North Pole we hear so much about, and chop it into fire-wood. We could have easily used a few armfuls that week on Candle Creek.

During the daytime I climbed and explored the hills about Candle and Keewalik, chasing the ptarmigan which rose in clouds at my approach,

studying the flora, and hunting for relics of the mammoth. I was in the heart of what must have been in past ages, a home of the woolly mammoth. Gigantic teeth and tusks of formidable length, are plentiful in the whole country bordering on Kotzebue Sound. A remark of the philosophical old miner also struck me. If men of wealth want to spend their money in the interests of science, they could easily do so in enriching state and provincial museums with mammoth skeletons, instead of throwing away thousands fitting out expeditions to find the North Pole. My old mining friend evidently had a grudge against the North Pole, for he exclaimed one night in tones more vigorous than polite, "What good will that blankety-blank old flag staff do the Americans when they have found it?"

A few thousand dollars spent in this region in unearthing the bones of monstrous pachyderms would be profitably spent. Innumerable remains have been found in Seward Peninsula and up in the Yukon Valley. Whether the animals lived here thousands of years ago, or whether their bones were brought in ice-floes over from Siberia, where they exist in countless

numbers, is a question for adepts to decide. A complete skeleton is lying in a bed of ice in the Buckland district, not far from Kotzebue Sound, awaiting money to have it carefully raised and conveyed a few miles to the coast, whence it could be shipped to some college museum. I met dozens of miners who had come upon teeth and tusks of mastedons while digging for gold. Miners are given to exaggeration, and their descriptions of the shapes and sizes of those remains appeared so improbable that I was not inclined to take them seriously until I saw in the hands of private owners tusks which had been recently found. Captain Rickmers had aboard the *Saidie* a splendid spiral tusk nearly fourteen feet long. The largest pair I saw, kept guard at the door of the road-house I stayed in, at Keewalik. They were both well preserved, each over twelve feet long, and nine inches thick at the heavy end. One weighed a hundred and sixty-eight pounds ; the other, a hundred and seventy-two. It does not take a very lively imagination to estimate the size and strength of the pachyderm which could carry about such offensive weapons as these.

The voyage back from the Arctic was much more satisfactory than the voyage up. The

passage through Bering Strait was made on an ideal afternoon. To the east of us stood two lofty peaks, twenty miles away; these were the Diomedes Islands keeping guard over the strait. Farther south stood the lonely Fairway Rock, a solitary monument marking the point of separation between the Arctic Ocean and Bering Sea. Beyond the Diomedes and Fairway, the hazy, blue line stretching along the horizon, made clearer with the help of the skipper's marine-glass, was the Siberian coast; and I had there and then, my first glimpse of Asia.

It gives a novel twist to one's thoughts and emotions to find oneself looking, for the first time, on that ancient land where the story of human joys and human miseries began. It was only a glimpse I had, of a hazy indistinct line on the horizon; but that was Asia; and with one's eyes fixed upon it, even a poor imagination could readily make up for the lack of closer observation.

Cape Prince of Wales, which was so indistinct and unsatisfactory on our way up, now stood out clear and high, and reminded one more and more of what Cape Diamond must have been the day Jacques Cartier first set eyes on it. One

needs to sail through Bering Sea but once to appreciate the schemes of the visionaries who would bridge its forty-six miles across. The moving fields of ice which pass up and down would soon make matchwood of the strongest handiwork of man. Still, Cape Prince of Wales is the nearest point to Asia, A day will surely come when the steam whistles of locomotives and gigantic ferry-boats will echo along those lonely shores; and when it comes at last, the long monopoly of the swarms of howling Mahlamute dogs will be at an end.

CHAPTER IX

Council Mining Camp — The Life of an Inland Miner

MY second journey, more prosaic, but not less fruitful in experience of the conditions of primitive living and travelling in Northwestern Alaska, was the first trip I made to Council City, ninety-five miles from Nome. Alaskans have a fondness for calling their camps "cities." Council City is only a cluster of cabins built on the bank of the Neukluk, a branch of Fish River, which, in its turn, flows through Golovin Bay into Bering Sea. Sullivan City, the chief place of the Gold Run district, is a hamlet composed of a few tents, an eating-house and a bar-room, according to the Irish-American from Iowa, after whom it is called. Nome itself is a city, for the same reason that our Yankee cousins delight in titles—mostly "tin" ones. We had in Nome colonels, majors, fifteen or twenty judges—lawyers are all called "judges" here—and captains innumerable.

Council is the commercial and "social" centre of a large gold-producing district, the main creek of which bears the suggestive name of Ophir. It was discovered even before Nome, and turned

out just as rich; but being situated in the interior of Seward Peninsula, is less easy of approach. A trip thither in summer is not a pleasant sail northward through Bering Strait into Arctic waters, but a slow, tiresome journey from Chinik, on Golovin Bay, in a long, flat horse-boat, sixty or seventy miles northward, through shallow streams and over innumerable sand-bars. Nothing can equal the monotony of sitting a whole day and half a night, watching an antique nag dragging and jerking behind him a couple of hundred feet of rope, with the spectator sitting in a scow at the end of it. When the mountains of snow melt in the springtime, torrents of water run down to the sea, carrying with them large quantities of earth which form sand-bars and change the course of the streams. Trees growing on the banks are undermined by the irresistible onrush of those spring freshets and tumble into the water. They do not usually block the stream completely, but they form dams and rapids formidable enough to test the navigating qualities of an Alaskan boatman. The patient old horse, with the instinct of a canal mule, climbs slowly over the obstructions, while the flat-boat sails round them. If the man at the helm, generally

one of the passengers, fails to measure his distance, the chances are that both scow and passengers get entangled in the fallen trees. Bucephalus, the motive power, always two hundred feet ahead of us, and most of the time out of sight, has been trained to stop when he feels a jerk at the rope, to give the boatmen time to extricate themselves. But if the jerk is not strong enough, the old horse forges ahead, the boat ploughs through a cloud of branches lying in the water. When the passengers escape with face and hands unscathed and clothes untorn, they put themselves down as lucky.

Two or three miles an hour is the average speed of freighting up the Fish and Neukluk Rivers. It gives one a chance to jump ashore and examine the grasses and wild flowers which swarm along the bank. The tundra is covered with them in summer, but their stunted growth bears witness to the rigors of the Arctic climate. Vegetation is forced to maturity in July ; for, if we except a hot week now and then, summer in Northwestern Alaska resembles May or June in Canada. I made the trip to Council in August, and the flowers were still in bloom, with heads far too large for their stunted stems.

Cranberries, salmon-berries, blueberries, the last-named large and tasteless, were barely clinging to the branches. Beneath the berry bushes were different kinds of grasses, starting from the water's edge and extending back to the hillsides. They made the valley of the Neukluk resemble our own beaver meadows. It was a rare pleasure to meet with trees on the way up to Council; an agreable change from the monotonous treeless tundra around Nome and along the Bering and Arctic coasts. The banks of the Neukluk were lined with spruce, heavy forests of it, which, as far as I could see, was none other than our own Canadian species. The trees were there in thousands, also stunted in growth, but big enough to build houses with and furnish firewood, which is an important factor in the development of this country. The forest is one of Nature's gifts to the inland miner. The absence of wood on the coast has been a serious obstacle to his progress. When Nome was building, every board and beam had to be brought in ships from the United States, at a cost of two hundred to two hundred and fifty dollars a thousand feet. It takes a great deal of the miner's gold dust to make both ends meet when prices are so high.

After a tedious journey of a day and a half in the flat boat, I reached Council City. The night was pitch dark, and in stepping from the boat, the rickety gangway slipped off. I fell into the ice-cold water and got thoroughly soaked, before a couple of willing hands pulled me on to dry land. This was a predicament to be in at midnight, in a strange mining camp. But people in Alaska must practice resignation: so I set to work to dry my clothes in a saloon near by, where I also managed to secure a couch for the rest of the night. Next morning, I was up and about, thoroughly refreshed by the midnight bath in the Neukluk.

Council is a typical miners' camping ground. The inevitable gambling and liquor-selling elements occupy every point of vantage, and the large commercial companies of Nome have branch stores there to meet the miners' needs. I had notes of introduction to a couple of families who made me feel at once that I was not a stranger in a strange land. The head of one was Dr. Anton, a physician from Southern California; the other was a shrewd New Yorker, Thomas Dwyer, who helped to build the North Shore railway between Montreal and Quebec in the

early eighties, and whose wife belongs to a well-known French Canadian family.

The second day after my arrival was Sunday, and I had to secure a hall to say Mass in. A vacant loft over a store was the best place I could find. But it was empty, and getting it ready was not an easy matter. I went from store to store and secured some twenty empty wooden boxes. I then borrowed a dozen planks, laid them across the boxes, swept the floor; and the roughly-improvised chapel was as ready as my poor efforts could make it, to receive the visit of the King of Kings. It has often been my duty as a missionary to say Mass in similar circumstances, and I can vouch for the consolations which such a duty brings with it. The emotions, keen and sweet, which overpower one while offering the Adorable Sacrifice, not in some vast cathedral, and before thousands of well-dressed worshippers, but in an abandoned loft on the bleak hillside of a lonely Alaskan mining camp, are favors, which, once experienced, one would not willingly forego. At such moments faith and devotion are granted in abundant measure, and bring home to one the conviction that God is with us, that He is surely with us,

even though there be only a few simple miners to share in the happiness of His Divine Presence.

A week spent in a camp on Ophir Creek, five miles from Council, taught me, I think, most of the secrets of sluice-mining; and I felt how true was the remark the good Irishwoman made to me in the Arctic, that "taking gold out of the ground is the honestest way of making a living." Edward Dunn, the owner of Claim 10, a westerner of many years experience in Arizona and Mexico, gave me a great deal of the information I was looking for. He brought home to me the fact that the mining world is a little world in itself, with its own language, its own laws and customs, a world that has attractions undreamt of by an outsider. "Once a miner always a miner," is a saying that is nearly true; for those who begin to look for nuggets in early years hardly ever break with the career. There is a fascination in the life, fostered by the prospect of some day "striking it rich," that keeps men at it, year in and year out; and though nine out of every ten miners feel that they will die poor, they keep on digging till death comes to end the worries of existence. There were men on Ophir Creek who had worked in Coolgardie in

Western Australia; others who had come from the gold fields of South Africa. One grey-haired old miner whom I met there, had been for thirty years in various parts of the world looking for gold, and had never touched a "pay-streak." On one occasion I told him frankly, that some day he would be found lifeless on one of those Alaskan trails; and I asked him what good would then have resulted from his feverish hunt after perishable gold. But the old pagan did not see things from my point of view. It was nuggets he was after; the future might take care of itself.

During the days at Ophir Creek, I went up to the hills on both sides of the valley, and did some botanizing after methods more sentimental than scientific; although I met with quite a number of plants which I could classify approximatively. Tiny flowers were everywhere in profusion, nestled under rocky crags and hidden away in crevices. With all the forces of Arctic nature against them, they were toiling in their short season to render beautiful this desolate portion of God's footstool. Larkspur, monkshood, yellow poppy, violets in countless numbers, and away up on a bleak hillside, little

AN AUTUMN SUNSET IN NORTHWESTERN ALASKA

TRAVELLING IN THE INTERIOR

bluebells almost concealed from sight among the rocks and mosses. The wild forget-me-not was there to recall home and all its tender memories, and I plucked a few and put them carefully away.

From my perch on the hill side I could see, a mile off, the miners shovelling "pay-dirt" into the sluice boxes. Below me lay the little Ophir stream, washing gold dust on its way to the Neukluk. Three hundred feet above me, the Sphinx of Ophir, a freak of nature carved in solid rock, old and weatherworn when its Egyptian rival was yet unborn, looked down with cold indifference, heedless of the golden treasures that lay for ages hidden at its feet.

We returned to Nome the same way we came, this time, however, with the current, carrying the horse and his driver back with us in the scow. I promised to make a second journey to Council sometime during the winter, when perhaps an occasion would present itself of building a church. This promise I kept under conditions vastly different from my summer trip, as a future chapter will relate.

CHAPTER X

The Autumn Exodus — Preparing for Winter on the Bering Coast

ONE'S first impressions of the Bering coast, gleaned from school-books and pictures, are generally a medley of fur-covered Eskimos and dog-teams, northern lights and icebergs, with a polar bear, or a walrus, thrown in for effect. But impressions like these are ruthlessly shattered when one sees miners in straw hats and shirt-waists, mopping the perspiration from their brows, as they trudge along the Nome beach or over the tundra.

During my first summer, Nome had spells of weather tropically hot. The rays came down mercilessly, chasing away the fogs and winds, and leaving Bering Sea in the enjoyment of tranquil sleep. During those sweltering moments, it is easy for the people in Alaska to imagine that they are in some southern clime. But hot days do not come too often. Rarely are the bracing breezes absent; and they give us such cool afternoons, followed by such delightful evenings, that one becomes oblivious of the world he left behind him. A walk along the sandy Bering beach, in those endless Arctic twilights, when the breeze

is not too strong and the surf not too ugly, to inhale life-giving ozone, is one of the few pleasures of life in Alaska, one which the miners and their families fully enjoy.

However, in a land where climatic conditions present such strange contrasts, and where, in the course of a few months, there will be twenty-one hours of darkness out of the twenty-four, it is not prudent to get enthusiastic over a few weeks of fair weather. In the early part of the summer, the presence of the sun shining till eleven o'clock at night, its reappearance at two in the morning, and the officious rays insinuating themselves through every crack and pin-hole, was rather an unwelcome novelty. Darken your room as much as you liked, a stray pencil of Alaskan daylight would always find you out, to remind you that you were in a Land of Midnight Sun.

As the season advanced, the night began to grow dark, and you felt that you were again in Eastern Canada. With a difference, however; our fair land, prodigal as it is of Nature's beauties, never gave us the sunsets it was my privilege to witness in Nome during the months of September and October. Nor is the phenomenon confined

to the Bering coast; all Alaska enjoys the wondrous spectacle. When evening comes on, and the sun begins to sink, the whole western sky is ablaze with color, shading off imperceptibly from deep azure overhead to the brightest orange on the hill-tops. Every cloud is crimsoned, and every rift reveals the orange background. When myriads of warm opalescent tints begin to shimmer around the ragged edges of a cloud, you gaze in admiration at a picture that God alone could paint. If you wait till the sun goes down completely, you see the lines of the horizon, blue and rugged, standing out against the orange sky, which is now slowly changing to a deep crimson. Soon, the heavens are aglow with rich, changing hues of royal purple and red gold, while a weird unearthly radiance lights up the waves of Bering Sea. For three long hours you may enjoy this glimpse of Wonderland; and when you finally turn away regretfully, it is to console yourself with the thought that over yonder in ice-bound Siberia, thousands of wretched outcasts have shared your emotions, and, for a few brief moments, have forgotten that they are in a land of exile. Sights like these are some of Nature's compensations; for we miss in Alaska

the autumn panorama of our incomparable Canadian forests. Not a tree nor shrub grows anywhere on the bleak coast; and the bare rock and monotonous, moss-covered tundra would be a melancholy substitute for the rich autumnal tints of our own maple-covered hillsides.

However, brilliant sunsets, cool evenings and darkening nights are harbingers of winter. The flight of a hundred thousand wild geese, following their leaders in serried V-shaped columns, down to Southern California, is another ; and you naturally begin to think of your coal supply and your furs. In September, the water in the creeks starts to freeze ; and since placer mining in Alaska depends on running water, and plenty of it, when the frost comes, the miners know that the season's end has also come. Then those sturdy men, with their summer's wages in their pockets, flock into camp. Three thousand miners, in slickers and water-boots, move through the streets, or stand in bunches, talking, singing, shouting, in a dozen different languages.

Nome then presents a spectacle which must have been often seen in the earlier days of California and Montana. The one question you hear on every side is : "Are you going out ?" a

question simple enough in appearance, but full of meaning for an Alaskan miner. It is intended to ask him whether he is going to spend the winter, with his friends or his family, in some congenial spot of the outside world, or whether he is going to remain in Nome, hidden away in snowdrifts, during eight long, dark, dreary months, without communication with the outer civilization, except by dog-teams, the nearest railway being two thousand three hundred miles off. Six or eight steamships are at anchor a couple of miles from shore; and lighters and small craft are passing to and fro all the time, crowded with men who are giving their own answer to the question.

It is during the interval between the shutting down of the mines and the closing of navigation that times are lively and business brisk in that northern camp. Then may be seen, in all its boisterous activity, the western camp life, so graphically depicted by Bret Harte and others, minus the element of crime. Nome has the reputation of being a model mining camp; in this respect, I hear, it rivals Dawson. This is the verdict of the miners themselves; nearly two-thirds of them citizens of the United States, who

spent some time in the Klondike district, prior to the stampede of 1900. Their residence in the Canadian territory had an excellent effect on them; and it is remarkable what respect they cultivated for our Canadian laws and law-keepers. The miners never tire of praising the activity and usefulness of the Northwest Mounted Police, nor are they slow in contrasting our Canadian methods with the useless, slip-shod system of military forts and garrisons in vogue in Alaska. And, in truth, there is little need of such displays of armed force in that country; for it is a fact that the vast majority of the men who go to Alaska, hail from the better mining classes. They are not of the traditional stamp one reads about in the pioneer days of the West, who fairly bristled with oaths and revolvers, ready to use both on the slightest provocation. The camp was unruly in 1900, when the dregs of Uncle Sam's domain were panning on the beach, and it had to be put under military law, but times and manners have improved since then. Still, without being unfair to Nome, I fear it would be stretching things unduly, to compare the camp, as a local editor did once, to a New England Sunday school.

A few unseemly incidents, now and then, ruffled the peaceful tenor of our lives. During my first autumn in Nome, several drunken brawls disedified the citizens before the last boat went out; a couple of miners nearly had their jugular veins cut in some passing unpleasantness. Only one robbery, however—a "hold up" they would call it in the West—was perpetrated; but the deed was done so artistically, and the results were so profitable to the perpetrators, that I give the details for the edification of the reader. One afternoon, five men were seated in a saloon, not two blocks from our house. Three were quietly reading, the other two were having a friendly game of cards, all five were certainly not looking for the emotions which were soon to be theirs. Suddenly, two masked men, armed to the teeth, entered the room, held out long, wicked-looking revolvers, and shouted "Hands up!" Not one of the five stirred, thinking it was only a case of uncouth horse-play. But the robbers came nearer to them, and brought their weapons so close to their upturned faces, that the card-players and their companions saw there was no room for a joke. One of the brigands kept his weapon cocked and levelled at the five, while

the other walked over to a gambling table and extracted eight hundred dollars. He went behind the bar, took another hundred from the cash register, then cooly demanded the combination number of the safe, which, of course, all five had quite forgotten. This work was done in a few moments, and noiselessly. The robbers then backed out through the door, bidding the five men "good-night and pleasant dreams," threatening them, however, with death if they dared to follow. The robbers disappeared in the darkness, leaving no clue as to their identity, and were not apprehended.

Just about the same time, a man was hanged by the United States marshal, for a triple murder, committed in the Aleutian Islands. He was prepared for death by Father Cataldo, who had the great consolation of bringing him to better sentiments. The young man went to the scaffold repenting of his crimes, and bewailing the fact that he had never had any home training to help him in his journey through life.

Meanwhile the season was advancing, and the crowds on the streets were growing smaller. Vessels laden with miners were leaving daily for Seattle and San Francisco, and intensely inter-

esting and dramatic were the scenes attending their departure. During the last week in October the exodus was at its height. Day and night, crews were hard at work loading and unloading the great black hulks at anchor in the offing. When night fell, hundreds of lanterns flickered like fire-flies along the beach. Above them, two powerful searchlights, moving over the waves like the eyes of a great monster, guided the workmen, and revealed here and there, in the darkness, bunches of miners passing to and from the ships.

There are no wharfs at Nome. The transfer of passengers and freight is made by lightering. You could hear men talking from lighter to lighter, trying to give orders, and shouting to make themselves heard above the roar of the surf. But nobody seemed to listen. It was a weird scene, rendered more weird still, by the intense earnestness of those thousands, strangers to one another, each taken up with his own interests, and each going to his own little spot in the world. It was a true picture of life in Alaska. They were the men "that pass in the night," barely "saluting each other in passing." Several of them, with pockets well-filled with gold, lost

their lives in the surf during the flitting. And how few sympathised! The papers next day told us all about the accidents; the day following, the victims were forgotten.

The really touching scene in Nome's yearly exodus is the departure of the last boat, and he must have a flinty heart, indeed, who could stand by unmoved. When the hour has come for the departure, the beach is black with people and their luggage, waiting for the lighters. You hear the farewells of friends, watch them till they board the vessel, hear the long blast which is the signal to start, see the huge leviathan turning southward and sailing away. Your eyes follow it till there remains nothing but a faint trace of smoke on the horizon. Then you turn away from the beach, with a feeling of intense loneliness and isolation ; a profound stillness has succeeded the previous bustle and activity ; already you begin to get a vivid foretaste of the "great silence" of an Alaskan winter.

In the autumn of 1902, after the last boat had left, a local paper created a ripple of excitement by publishing an "official" report of one of the United States Hydrographic Bureaus,

which stated that the seismic disturbances of the previous year had probably shifted the bed of the Japanese current three or four hundred miles eastward, and that we were likely to feel the beneficial effects along the Bering coast. This would mean a milder climate for Nome, with less coal to buy and fewer furs to wear; and the news was not unwelcome. The report was served up so persistently, and commented on so dogmatically, that the old-timers, who had seen the mercury freeze many a time, began to think that lotus would soon be growing on the tundra. An unusual delay in the arrival of the ice from the North only strengthened this illusion.

It was now the turn of the pessimist. An old whaling captain living in Nome, who had spent thirty-five years in those regions, declared that, in 1868, the Arctic ice had met a similar delay and was then driven half a mile up the beach. This meant the destruction of Nome or some other catastrophe equally appalling. However, the appearance, one afternoon early in November, of a field of Arctic ice peacefully floating around Nome and filling Bering Sea as far as the eye could reach, and the simultaneous

republication of an article by some scientist or other, telling us that the Japanese current had not changed its course, and that, even if it had, it would not affect our climate, was a set-back to the vaporings of our local weather prophets.

This kind of nonsense kept our minds occupied and prevented us from getting too lonesome, and with the incoming of the ice and the freezing of Bering Sea, we settled down for the winter which was to end only in the following June. By the middle of November the snow had fallen in tremendous quantities. A cold north wind ground it into the finest powder which filled every corner with impassable drifts. The thermometer took a sudden drop to 20° below, and nothing but mukluks and parkehs began to be seen on the streets of Nome. The mukluks are footwear made of walrus hide and sealskin leggings, and are similar to the Canadian moccasins. The winter parkeh is a fur garment, like a sweater in appearance, but longer and wider, with a hood attached which protects the head. The tails of foxes or wolverines are invariably sewn to the outer edge of the hood. This addition gives a whiteman a decidedly Alaskan look, and perhaps caters a little to his

polar vanity, but it keeps out the keenest blasts of the Arctic wind. The parkeh is the outer garment worn by the native Eskimo ; and its adoption by the white population of Alaska is the best proof of its usefulness.

Meanwhile, the cold grew more intense, but did not prevent us from making ample preparations for Christmas, which came and went, leaving behind it precious souvenirs. Midnight Mass was celebrated with all possible solemnity, Rosewig's music being rendered by a choir improvised for the occasion. The thermometer that night registered 28° below, but the church in Nome was crowded with people of all classes and denominations.

The Sisters of Providence had decorated the sanctuary with green boughs, brought from the nearest forest, seventy-five miles away ; and for the first time in this extreme end of the western world, the Infant Saviour, lying in His manger of Arctic moss, stretched out His tiny arms to bless all who knelt before Him.

Several events helped to make the holidays pass pleasantly away. Large Christmas trees were dressed for the public school children and the Eskimos by the few Catholic ladies in the

town. They were like other Christmas trees the world over; but our proximity to the North Pole enabled us to give to the function a touch of nature rarely witnessed in more favored lands. Santa Claus, stout and hearty as usual, with kindness in his eyes and snowdrifts on his eyebrows, came tripping over the Arctic hills, carrying his bundles of good things. But he did not come alone. Three lively, kicking reindeer, with their merry bells jingling in the frosty air, brought the old gentleman in his poulkeh across the hardened snowcrust, to spread joy and sweet meats among the astonished school-children.

The reinder feature had been kept quite secret, and never did I witness such enthusiasm as lighted up the expectant and delighted little sea of faces when the cry, "Here he comes! here he comes!" was heard, and jolly old Santa and his reindeer drove up to our door. Reindeer are quite gentle, I am told, and not at all demonstrative; but the shouting and enthusiasm of the Nome children were too much for their nerves. They skipped and jumped about, turned to the right and then to the left. They raised their noble antlers, sniffed the air, wondering, no doubt, whether all this Christmas excitement

meant peace or war; and finally, they made a desperate attempt to get away. It took the united efforts of Santa Claus and his Lapland driver to hold them back.

Reindeer were introduced into Alaska by the United States government, four or five years ago. They are confined to deer stations along, the coast and up the Yukon. They are still looked upon as a luxury and their ultimate usefulness is at least problematical. The whole reindeer enterprise meets with much sarcastic opposition from the present population, who see in it only a scheme to use government money to enrich a few private individuals who know how to pull wires at Washington. Time will tell who are right and who are wrong. Of one thing, however, there is no doubt, namely, that the presence of the reindeer gave a very realistic air to the children's Christmas festival, one which few of us will soon forget.

Another event of entirely different import, but no less pleasurable and consoling, was the celebration of the golden jubilee of Father Cataldo, my companion in Nome. Although then only sixty-five years of age, this venerable missionary had spent fifty years in the service of God, under

"INSIDE" FOR THE WINTER

THE SHORTEST DAY—AN ALASKAN CABIN

the banner of Saint Ignatius. Half a century before, he left the vine-clad hills and orange groves of his native Sicily, to follow in the Master's footsteps, and since that time few modern apostles had such an active and well-filled career. Father Cataldo lived nearly forty years in the Rocky Mountains. He began his missionary life among the tribes there when they were still hunting buffaloes on the American prairies, long before any of the railways crossed the continent. He learned their languages and preached the Gospel to the Flatheads, Piegans, Nez Percés, Colvilles, Gros Ventres, Kalispels, Cœur d'Alènes, Spokanees, etc.; and the Indians whom he found pagans and foes of the whiteman, he left civilized and Christian and contented wards of the Republic. Few of the writers who go into ecstacies over the marvels of civilization and conversion which were wrought in the Reductions of Paraguay, in the eighteenth century, seem to be aware that those marvels have been renewed, in the nineteenth, among the aborigines of the Rocky Mountains.

In 1897, Father Cataldo went to Alaska. He set to work to study the Eskimo and Tinneh languages, and to repeat among those neglected

tribes what he had done among the Indians of Montana and Idaho. The people of Nome were unwilling to let the occasion of his golden jubilee pass away without giving him a mark of their appreciation. They presented him with a handsome gold cross made of Alaskan nuggets with a suitable inscription and the figures "50" in relief; a souvenir characteristic of the country he was working in, as well as emblematic of his work. The cross is truly the emblem of missionary work in that desolate land. Life there is isolated, lonely and uncongenial. There are few consolations outside of the consciousness that every hour of fatigue is written to one's credit in the pages of the Book of Life, and that God, who is faithful and keeps His promises, will know when and how to turn pains and disappointments into unending joys.

CHAPTER XI

Winter Isolation in Alaska — The Great White Silence

THE first long winter on the Bering coast passed off slowly and monotonously. One must have had personal experience of eight months' isolation in an Arctic mining camp—with nearly three of the eight in comparative darkness, seeing nothing during all that time, on hill and tundra and sea, but snow and ice, ten to fifteen feet thick, hearing nothing but the whistling of winds and the howling of Eskimo dogs—to know what winter life really means in that distant part of the world.

When navigation closed in the autumn, everyone began, in a practical way, to settle down for the winter. A stranger could see that the old-timers apprehended a season of intense cold, and a long siege of it, by the almost absurd precautions they were taking to bank their cabins with earth, and to fill the chinks around their doors and windows.

Towards the end of October, the nights had become long and intensely dark, and we had to use artificial light earlier every afternoon. With the advancing season, the days grew short

so rapidly that we began to ask when they were going to stop. In December, the darkness had eaten so deeply into the morning and evening, that we had barely three hours of sunlight. When the winter solstice arrived, December 21st, the sun just peeped over the horizon and then dropped into Bering Sea again; we were living in Arctic twilight. Darkness was complete at three o'clock in the afternoon; and nothing relieved the dreadful monotony, till ten o'clock the next day, but the large electric cross on our church-spire, whose graceful arms shed brilliancy over Nome twenty hours daily. What a dreary world this would be if we had to live in perpetual night; and how little we appreciate the golden rays which shine down on us during half our lives! Snow and darkness, cold and winds make up the unattractive picture of life during the winter on the Bering coast; but one's time is always fully occupied, so that there is no room for lonesomeness; and besides, people there are full of mutual sympathy; they loyally share one another's burdens. Life is, in consequence, not half so miserable as it might be.

When I received orders to go to Alaska, one of my direst apprehensions was the rigor of the

climate. How should I ever be able to stand the penetrating cold of an Alaskan winter? Having passed through two unscathed, I feel that I can write with some knowledge of the subject, at least as far as Seward Peninsula is concerned. The climate there is certainly severe, yet not at all to the degree that newcomers expect. When we speak of Alaskan weather, we, of course, leave Southeastern Alaska entirely out of the question. The lowest official record in Sitka for more than fifty years was 4° above zero, Fahrenheit; but Sitka is more than five hundred miles south of Nome and Council. Along the Yukon valley, at points in the same latitude as Nome, the temperature is very low in winter. In Nulato, the thermometer sometimes registers 72° below zero, Fahrenheit. But nothing similar happened in Nome while I was there. During my first winter, the thermometer registered 44° below zero only once, though we experienced a great variety of temperatures. Between Christmas and the Epiphany, however, the mercury did not once rise above 30° below zero, Fahrenheit. These figures would be considered phenomenal in Eastern Canada, but they are not so considered in Nome. No one seemed to mind the

severe cold or the snow; the weather was rarely a topic of conversation,—perhaps because we had so much of it.

There must be physical conditions besides latitude which affect the severity of climate. Several miners told me that cold, 60° below zero, which they experienced on the Yukon and on Kotzebue Sound, did not exact more hygienic precautions than 15° or 20° would have done in Quebec or the Maritime Provinces. One feels the truth of this when one sees men living comfortably, through the long winter, in canvas tents and cabins heated only with small sheet-iron stoves. In Nome, children played in the streets, even when the thermometer was 30° below zero. An afternoon walk out over the tundra on snowshoes or skis, when the temperature is between 30° and 40° below, and the air is still and blue, is both pleasant and healthful. Now and then, one puts one's hands up to feel whether one's nose and ears are in their accustomed places; but this is mostly from the force of habit. As a result, there are few invalids in that country. It is the proud boast of Alaskans—and I am convinced there is some foundation for it—that their winter climate is the most invigorating in the world.

There is danger of freezing only when this intense cold is accompanied with wind and drifting snow. It is then that certain precautions must be taken ; for blizzards are the great sources of danger in Northwestern Alaska. The miners who have been frozen to death in them were the imprudent or the inexperienced ones, who ventured out over the trails, or across the hills, when they should have followed the example of the natives and stayed under cover ; one rarely hears of an Eskimo freezing to death. The atmosphere is so dry that, after a storm, there is always a very large quantity of finely-powdered snow lying in drifts on the hills. When the wind blows, it drives this snow before it with terrific velocity, filling the air with clouds of it, blinding travellers and obliterating all trails in a twinkling. Objects fifty feet away become invisible ; and under these circumstances darkness may set in.

When this happens, a miner loses his way, even though he may not be twenty feet from the trail. After circling around aimlessly, for a few weary hours, undergoing meanwhile an excruciating mental agony—for he knows he is astray—his feet and legs grow numb, which is

the beginning of the end. In a little while he sinks down, drowsy and exhausted, to rise no more.

I met several miners who had felt the symptoms of incipient freezing, and who would have succumbed, had they not been rescued. They will carry all their lives vivid mental pictures of those moments. Invariably they saw lights flitting about, which deceived them as to distances; they heard sounds like bells, and sometimes delightful music, which drew their minds away from their danger. These pleasurable sensations are, strange to say, the result of hunger and exhaustion. Near the end, the pain of death by freezing resembles, they say, that of death by burning. But these sensations are of short duration; the miner soon falls asleep and dies painlessly. Every year there are tragic instances of freezing to death; during my two winters, four or five were thus found on the trail cold and lifeless.

When men acquire some experience of conditions in that country, the element of danger disappears. An old-timer out on the trail will not face a blizzard. When there is no cabin or roadhouse close at hand, he digs a hole in the

snowdrift, and waits there till the storm has spent its rage. He has sometimes to stay two or three days hidden away in his furs or sleeping-bag, which gives him leisure to meditate on man's helplessness before nature's angry moods. It is well for him if he has food for this period of forced inactivity; sometimes he has not. A miner on Kotzebue Sound, who is also a physician, told me he was caught in a blizzard while on a sick-call, during the previous winter. He had to burrow a hole in a snowdrift, where he stayed seventy-two hours. Hunger obliged him to consume portions of his furs and moccasins; he said he never tasted anything half so palatable.

Another miner met with a more tragic experience, a couple of years before. He had killed a bear and skinned him. A blizzard coming on, he rolled himself in the ample folds of the fur for protection; but this nearly proved his undoing. In a few hours, the bearskin, which was fresh from its owner's back, was frozen into a solid mass and almost smothered the hapless miner. His companions found him encased in a shell as hard as iron, and had to use an axe to extricate his all but lifeless body.

Travelling in Alaska during winter is a problem that has not yet been fully solved, even by John Brower, the genius who invented what is known in that country as the "hot-air" stage. As a rule, prudent people stay at home in winter. The Eskimos rarely leave their igloos during the long white silence, and the typical miner has learned to follow their example. In autumn, when his work is finished on his "claim," and he decides to stay in Alaska, he sets to work to build himself a log-cabin, he fills the chinks with Arctic moss, cuts his season's firewood, buys his eight months' supply of Chicago canned goods, and then retires to his nest till the springtime. This is how thousands of men live through the long, dark winter. If a miner goes a-prospecting, he harnesses his team and travels over the snow-covered tundra, well supplied with food and furs. When night comes on, he digs a hole in the snow, or lies down on the lee side of his sled and dogs, then rolls himself in his furs, and goes to sleep. It is no extraordinary sight to see members of the gentler sex muffled in furs, trudging over the hills, from camp to camp, with their dog-teams and miners' outfits.

There is one woman-miner in Nome who is quite famous in all Northwestern Alaska. She is familiarly known in the mining world as "Mother," a kindly name earned by her for the large, generous heart she carries under a weather-beaten, masculine exterior. This miner and her faithful dogs followed the two-thousand-mile stampede from Dawson, during the first Nome excitement, and she secured large mining interests in the Solomon district. I met her on the Bering coast, one wintry afternoon, tripping along behind her sled and team as lightly as if twenty and not fifty years were weighing on her shoulders.

But women of this hardy stamp are not numerous in that country. Those who indulge in feats of endurance, in their "mushing" over the tundra, are the ones who have been in Alaska for three or four years, and who know just how venturesome they may be without risking their lives. But when recent arrivals—or "chechakos," as they are called,—want to travel in winter, the dangers of the trail must be foreseen and guarded against. Newcomers, who do not take the conditions of the country into account, run the risk of being found frozen to death.

The introduction of the "hot-air" stage has made travelling relatively comfortable in Seward Peninsula; and a good deal of traffic goes on in winter between Nome and the different camps. Large, double sleighs, built like the time-honored emigrant prairie-schooners, have been introduced on the various trails. A double covering of thick canvas, enclosing a thin air space, covers the entire top and keeps in the warmth which is furnished by a small stove solidly bolted in one corner.

Of course, the old-timers, or "sour-doughs," ignore this way of travelling, and still "mush" over the country with their dogs. The dog is the Alaskan miner's friend. Half a dozen harnessed to a sled will haul eight or ten hundred pounds of supplies twenty or thirty miles a day, without any difficulty. This is the reason why they are so useful in Alaska. There are few miners who do not own at least three, which they keep busy going from one mine to another during the winter months. In summer, the curs lie about the camps doing nothing. In Nome, you cannot walk ten steps without falling over one or more of them lying in your path, too lazy to move. They rest during the day, but during

the night they keep you awake with their unearthly howling. During my first summer there, one of the large commercial companies blew a steam whistle, morning, noon and night. This was a boon, inasmuch as it enabled us to set our watches, and keep some sort of uniform time; but it was also a terrific nuisance, for it let loose the enervating yells of seven or eight hundred Eskimo dogs, which made the air vibrate, three times a day, with all the notes imaginable.

The worst feature of their case is that those dogs do not know when to stop. The howl of the Alaskan miner's friend is not the ordinary music produced by our eastern curs, whose long, doleful, crescendo and diminuendo notes have, after all, a sentimental element about them, with which ordinary mortals can sympathise. The Eskimo dog cannot bark, but he makes himself heard for all that. Imagine you have the cur's throat in your grasp, and are squeezing it with all your strength. The struggle he makes to breathe and bark is the Alaskan howl. At times, he whines, and cries, and sobs, like a person in distress. This was done so very naturally, that several times I was brought to my window, ex-

pecting to see some little broken-hearted child lost on the tundra. It was only a vile Mahlamute preparing for his midnight music. When I reached Nome, a kennel of these animals was planted not a hundred feet from our house; and my first month was almost wholly taken up in practising patience and trying to attune my ears to canine symphonies.

A talent for music is only one of the debateable qualities of the miner's friend. For cunning and thievery, the Eskimo dog bears away the palm, and he is rarely to be trusted. In his innocent moments, he is always looking after "number one," and on the scent for booty. He is a beautiful animal, and affectionate; but when his large, soft eyes, are looking into yours so intelligently, when his great, bushy tail is wagging expression to the joy he feels at meeting you, keep an eye on your bundles. If your door is open, he steals your meat, preferring ptarmigan to reindeer; he lifts the lid of your fish-box, steals your fish, and then replaces the lid noiselessly; he reads the labels on tins of canned goods, so the miners say; for it is a well-known fact, that when two tins are put before him, he takes the meat invariably, and leaves the fruit.

The stories, wise and otherwise, that are told by miners of the propensities of the Eskimo dog are amusing. He is, for all that, the Alaskan miner's friend, and because he is such, many of his foibles are overlooked. He is faithful, even in death; many a time he has been found on the trail, plaintively sobbing and lying on the frozen body of his master, trying to give it warmth, long after the vital spark had fled.

Another miner's friend, an institution peculiar to Alaska, and a boon to lost or storm-bound travellers in winter, is the "road-house." On the trails to Council, Sullivan, Candle, and along the coast, about every ten miles, a low log-cabin is built, or it may be only an abandoned native igloo, and fitted up with bunks and blankets. When the half-frozen miner, worn and fatigued, without food for himself or his dogs, sees a lantern at the end of a pole in some valley, or on a white hillside, he knows that he is safe from the storm. A roaring fire, a piping glass of toddy, or a red-hot cup of tea, makes the blood flow freely in his veins, and gives him back life and vigor. Road-houses on the Alaskan trail, during a blizzard, are more welcome to a miner than wells of sparkling water to an Arab on the

Sahara. They are poorly kept—I speak from my experiences in five of them—but they are life-saving stations in an inhospitable climate; momentary homes in Alaskan fastnesses; oases amid the great white silence. Their keepers are the miners' benefactors; and still the philanthropic government makes them pay a yearly license. That is to say, they are obliged to pay for the privilege of saving the lives of the very men who are pouring gold yearly into Uncle Samuel's plethoric treasury.

With dog-teams, hot-air stages and road-houses, life is not too miserable on the Alaskan trail. With the aid of the last two, I made several winter journeys to and from Council City. During one of these, I got my first taste of an Alaskan blizzard, the memory of which will remain as long as I live. A terrific storm overtook our party half-way between that camp and Nome. We had started from Topkuk, on the Bering coast, on the fourth day of our journey. We had not gone more than three miles, when a brisk wind began to blow the dry snow across the trial, and in a few minutes had completely blotted out every trace of it. The wind grew stronger and filled the air with tiny particles of

NOME DURING THE GREAT WHITE SILENCE

MIDNIGHT IN JUNE—ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST STEAMER

snow, which beat pitilessly against the stage-driver's face with the pricking force of a thousand needles. His horses' eyes and nostrils were filled with this fine powder. They began to be smothered; they stampeded from side to side and refused to obey the reins. If they could be kept on the trial, the shelter of a hill, or wooded spot, would give them a respite from their tortures. But this seemed impossible; the air was thick and dark with snow which drifted rapidly up against the stage. Meanwhile the thermometer, which we carried with us, went down from 15° below to 40° Fahr. The wind grew fiercer, and howled and whistled, and threatened to tear away the canvas of the stage.

My travelling companion, an old German, and I were commiserating the poor driver outside, when the stage suddenly left the trail, gave a lurch to one side, and we felt ourselves going rapidly over. The force of the blizzard had done the work, and sooner than it takes to write it, we found ourselves on the broad of our backs on the floor of the stage. I myself was pinned down by a bale of compressed hay and a tool-chest, while the German began to call wildly for help, as the red-hot coal stove, bolted to the

stage, was right over him, and he was in mortal dread lest a shower of lighted coals should come down on him. The driver rushed to the rear, opened the door, and extricated us none the worse.

The change from the warm air inside the stage to 40° below zero outside, was anything but agreeable, but willy-nilly we had to face it. So we set to work to help the driver to unload his freight and lift the stage back on the trail. Among other articles, I picked up a box, iron-bound and covered with the word "Caution," which had fallen from the driver's seat into the snow. It turned out to be a box of dynamite, and fortunately had struck a soft snow-drift. Had it reached the ice, a foot beneath, there is no telling how this Alaskan episode might have ended. At all events it was impossible to go any farther that day, in the face of the blinding storm; so we went back to the Topkuk road-house which we had left that morning. This was a terrific journey. I reached Council after seven days of painful experiences, such as, I trust, my successors in this field shall not have to endure.

CHAPTER XII

The Alaskan Mails — Social Life in a Mining Camp

THE winter 1902-03 will be surely known in the annals of Northwestern Alaska as the winter of the "big snow." Even the natives could not recall anything like it. Ten or twelve feet of snow lay on the level tundra. The poles of our coast telephone were eighteen feet high; yet people had to bend their heads in order to pass under the wires. Traffic in the streets of Nome was rendered well-nigh impossible ; in Council it was altogether suspended. I spent the months of February and March in the latter camp, and saw the one-storey cabins of the miners literally buried under the snow. Nothing but the projecting stove-pipes here and there, with a hole in the snow, revealed the presence of human habitations. After a storm, these holes are also filled, and the stove-pipes alone remain above the surface.

During my stay in Council, I lived alone in a log cabin, kindly placed at my disposal by Dan Garvey, a miner from Minnesota. One morning in March, I awoke quite refreshed; but it was still

dark, and I hid myself in my bearskin waiting for daylight. I waited a long time, it seemed to me, for the rays that did not come. When, at last, I struck a match and looked at my watch, it was two o'clock in the afternoon. My cabin had been covered up by a snow drift. And it was time to go back to bed again before I had a hole dug to let in the golden sunlight.

This was the worst blizzard in the history of the camp. We had no respite for six weeks. Layer after layer was added to the lofty banks of snow, and made them high enough to give us an historic winter. There were intervals, however, as the days grew brighter and longer, when the weather was superb, and the aspect of the surrounding hills marvellous.

A scene which I witnessed, on March 25th, from the door of my cabin in Council, will be one of my imperishable souvenirs of Alaska. The cold was intense ; the air still ; the white silence oppressive and unbroken, save by a few miners and Eskimos breaking the ice-crust with their sleds and dog-teams. Columns of smoke rose here and there from the neighboring snowbanks, denoting warmth and comfort underneath. The incomparable Ophir hills, hidden under snow,

stood serrated and massive less than a mile away; beyond and above them, the Bendeleben range, also white to the very summits, fringed the bluest of blue skies. Here was Nature itself offering a tribute in blue and white—Mary's own colors—to the Queen of Heaven, on her great spring festival. The memory of purely Arctic scenes like this, so picturesque and so fascinating, stays with one, and makes the interminable winter cold and darkness, and life in a lonely cabin, not so dreary after all.

There is something harder to endure, in Northwestern Alaska, than cold, or snow, or darkness. It is our isolation during the long winter, and the absence of communication with the outside world. During eight months no steamer gets nearer than seven hundred miles to Nome; we are over two thousand miles from the nearest railway. No mail reached Nome from the first of October till the middle of January; and to feel the weeks and months passing slowly away, without a word or letter from civilization, was a novel experience.

At Christmas, you could hear people on the street wishing each other the season's compliments, and then mutually wondering, through

their fur-hooded parkehs, whether the coal strike were ended, a question which had only a speculative interest for us who paid thirty-five dollars a ton that year; whether Mount Pelee were still active; whether any international difficulties had sprung up; whether California had gone democrat or republican; and discussing the dozen other subjects which were occupying men's minds when the ice closed us in, the preceding autumn.

The first mail reached us on January 18th, 1903, after it had been ninety days on the trail. This sounds startling in a world which Phineas Fogg completely encircled in eighty days, when we were young. But Mr. Fogg did not travel through Northwestern Alaska. Dawson is reported to have had a daily mail all the winter; but Nome, even with its shortened winter-trails, is as far away from Dawson as Winnipeg is from Montreal; and that makes all the difference.

The mail service down the Yukon is perhaps unique in the world. The difficulties of transportation are so great that, according to a recent statistician, every letter entering Seward Peninsula, during the winter season, costs the United States government one dollar, before it is delivered to the person named on the envelope.

If one could follow the fortunes of a Nome mail-bag, during its journey from the outside world to Dawson; then down the Yukon River on the ice, twelve hundred miles with dog-teams; then across the winter trail from Kaltag to Unalaklik; then along the Bering coast to Nome, one would get a fair idea of the difficulties the Alaskan postal service has to contend with, and the almost incredible hardships the mail-carriers have to endure on their long, lonely journeys back and forth.

Clothed in warm furs and shod with mukluks of walrus and sealskin, those men grasp the handles of their slender mail-sleds and start out for a sixty or a seventy days' trip behind their dog-teams. In the season of darkness, hardly more than a twilight brightens their way at mid-day. The heavy snowfalls frequently blot out their trails on the Yukon; while the blizzards along the Bering coast, on the last two hundred and forty miles of their journey, are relentless. Only experienced "mushers," men hardened by cold and exposure, and dogs strong and able to bear their own share of hardship and responsibility, are employed in the mail service. I had it from the mail-contractor himself that his team

of seven dogs, in five days, wore out one hundred pairs of moccasins.

Carriers are liable to be caught in storms when they least expect it ; and that is the reason why fifty stations, each furnished with an eight months' food-supply, besides outfits for men and dogs, are scattered along Bering Sea and the Yukon. The system is complete, but necessarily slow; still it compares favorably with the system which, four or five years ago, gave Western Alaska news only once a year. After the arrival of the first mail in January, a punctual weekly service gratified the people of Nome and Council. News even three months old was better than none at all.

There is always a little excitement around the camps when the coast telephone, at Topkuk, sends the message over the wire that the outside mail is only sixty miles away, and "should be in to-morrow." The morrow sees dozens of people standing and waiting, aglow with expectation, while the few letters are hurriedly sorted.

There is no more favorable spot for the study of character than an Arctic post-office. It is pathetic to watch a miner at the wicket. You can see disappointment written on his face when

he turns away empty-handed; it means that those in the outside world, for whom he is living in exile, are forgetting him. The lucky recipient of a letter does not wait till he reaches his cabin to devour news, three months old, from home and friends; to him it is all fresh and welcome. And the smile playing on his lips, as he reads on, or the anxious tear furtively brushed away, tells its own tale, and betrays the fact that under the grim, almost savage crust of a miner, there is a heart that throbs into life when news from mother, or wife, or child, comes to gladden or sadden his lonely life. Alaskan air does not change human nature; its blizzards do not chill the human heart; and if friends in the outer world knew how miners—and non-miners—look for those tiny messengers from home, bearing tidings of joy or sorrow; if they saw their tremulous fingers unfolding those soft interpreters of life's emotions, they would hardly fail to write often and copiously.

During the winter months, mail-contracts with dog-teams call for the transportation of first-class matter only. Newspapers, magazines, etc., are held over at Seattle, where many tons await the summer steamers.

The craving for news of the wide, wide world, which, it is remarked, grows as the season advances, is satiated only partially by clippings from papers which come from friends, sealed and fortified for the journey with letter postage. These clippings are handed round from neighbor to neighbor; they are read and re-read, and commented on, till they fall to pieces. Is this craving in miners only an idle curiosity? Or is there some other psychological reason underlying it, which makes men, living in isolation, ravenously devour news of the world's doings, three or four months old, and discuss them with as much energy as if the events were actually transpiring? To cite an example. The news of the Venezuelan imbroglio reached us late in February. The affair had, by that time, become a matter of history. Still, the news was fresh in Alaska; and the merits of the German-Anglo-American difficulty were entered into again; the Munroe doctrine was discussed over and over again, with a vehemence that was positively interesting to a foreigner like myself. I remarked that, in those discussions, the United States generally had the best of it. What Uncle Sam does, is nearly always the correct thing with Alaskans.

The people in Nome who found time hanging heavily on their hands, during the long winter, clubbed together for amusement, or for mutual improvement. There are several active societies here, two of which I may mention. Incidentally, they throw a side-light on the class of people one happens to meet in a large Alaskan mining camp.

The Alaskan Academy of Sciences was formed in the winter of 1903, with the praiseworthy object of collecting data referring to the geography, geology, botany, ethnology, etc., of Alaska. Outside of a few superficial government reports, very little is yet known about that country. A vast unexplored field is open for the investigation of scientists, and a great deal of useful information may be collected even by amateurs.

The Kegoayah Kozga, which, being translated from the Eskimo, means Aurora Club, was composed of a couple of dozen of Nome ladies, who met once a week, and listened to the reading of papers on literature, art, woman's rights and duties, and other transcendental subjects. One of the lady members read a paper once on "Modern Metaphysics," — which was followed by refreshments.

The Arctic Brotherhood, the Polar Union, etc., are also offshoots of Alaskan social life. They aim at recreation, and help the worldlings who find life long up here, to make it shorter. A couple of well-appointed halls give the people of Nome the facilities to combine work with pleasure ; and during the winter, a great deal was done for sweet charity's sake. The proceeds of two or three entertainments helped us to buy coal for the season, and to decorate our church handsomely. One entertainment gave nearly a thousand dollars to Holy Cross Hospital.

Speaking of the hospital reminds me at once of the Angels of Nome. In the June of 1902, four Sisters of Providence went from Montreal to that distant land, unknown and unheralded, and filled with the apostolic spirit which has made the daughters of Madame Gamelin so well known on the Pacific coast. When they landed on the Bering beach they resembled the Divine Master; for they had hardly a place whereon to rest their heads. An old mess-house, narrow and uncomfortable, belonging to one of the commercial-companies, was secured for them, and there they stayed till they had planned their course of action. They bought a large building, in the

very heart of Nome, furnished it soberly with beds and hospital requirements, and there and then began a career of God-inspired charity and zeal, which was a revelation to the citizens and a source of pride for us of the Faith.

At first, it was not so much the practical side of their work as the romantic, that appealed to the indifferent classes. It was the fact that the Sisters had left what the newspapers called "home and the joys of home-life," and had gone so many thousands of miles to spread the sweet odor of charity around the beds of sick and dying miners that made the people think, and talk, and praise.

An incident, or rather a catastrophe, occurred at Christmas, which helped to lift them higher in the esteem of everybody. A lamp exploded in a cabin full of Eskimos, just in rear of our church, and frightfully burned eight poor natives, who had not learned to cope with so rapid an agent as whitemen's kerosene. I never witnessed a more sickening sight than that presented by those eight human beings, burned beyond recognition, while they lay writhing in agony on the hospital floor. Three ended their sufferings in death; the other five were taken care of by

the Sisters, for many weeks, and tenderly nursed back to health. All Nome watched their generous and gentle services in this repulsive work, and its admiration knew no bounds.

A tactful and energetic superior was sent to guide the destinies of that foundation; and she succeeded marvellously. The Sisters are firmly established in Holy Cross Hospital, and are beloved by the miners. The physical sufferings of those poor men are relieved so tenderly and so efficaciously, that their gratitude is very often pathetic to behold.

And still, all the devotedness of these spouses of the Master is only a means to a higher end; theirs is also proving a successful heavenly mission. Through bodily ailments, they have reached out and touched many a callous heart. Nothing appeals to a miner so strongly as the tenderness that is shown to him in his physical infirmities —those poor men meet so little of it in their rugged lives. It is through the ministrations of the Sisters of Providence that the missionary is able to reach the souls of crusty old miners, who have forgotten even their prayers. God and His recording angel alone know how many spiritual ills have been cured, and how many souls have

been encouraged to higher things, since the Sisters came to Nome. Their saintly foundress must surely look down with satisfaction on those daughters of hers, living and laboring almost at the very door of Asia.

CHAPTER XIII

The Aboriginal Tribes of Alaska — History and Customs

WHEN the Russians, and, after them, independent travellers, had quite thoroughly explored Alaska, they concluded that the country was peopled by four great tribes, or groups, of natives, distinct in language, customs and traditions, and with tribal boundaries well defined. They were the Aleuts, the Eskimos, the Thlinkets, and lastly, the Tinnehs, or Western Athabaskans. Those four groups are sub-divided into many minor tribes, or families, sub-divisions wholly based on linguistic differences.

As these chapters on Alaska are more concerned with mining life along the Bering coast than with the aboriginal population of the territory, a few notes, necessarily superficial, on each of the four groups, are all that is required to give a touch of completeness to this work, and to carry out the plan I proposed to myself when I began to write. Readers may find my information incomplete, but they should remember that the facilities for ethnological research are rare in an Alaskan mining camp.

ROCKING FOR GOLD IN THE BEACH-SANDS AT NOME

THE BERING COAST IN WINTER

However, a few sources of knowledge presented themselves, of which I availed myself fully. Besides the work of Ivan Petroff, who had access, apparently, to many documents relating to Alaska, including the writings of Venimianof, I had the advantage of private correspondence with missionaries on the Yukon, and long conversations with old-time residents in Alaska, who willingly imparted to me all they knew abut the tribes and their customs. From those sources I have gleaned what I give in these pages concerning the present position of the native population. In the order of treatment, the inhabitants of the Aleutian Islands shall come first.

The Aleuts occupy the north coast of the Alaskan Peninsula, from Cape Stroganof westward, and its southern coast from Pavlof Bay westward. They also inhabit Shumagin Islands and the whole of the Aleutian chain. No one can speak with certainty about the origin of this race, or of the name it bears. Ivan Petroff thinks the name can be traced to Alutora, a river in Kamchatka. This author had the hardihood to assert that ethnologists had given over the hypothesis that the Aleuts were of Asiatic origin; that, notwithstanding their features, de-

cidedly Mongoloid, neither the language, nor a single tradition of the tribe, pointed to prehistoric migration from Asia.

When the Russians sailed out of the Sea of Okhotsk, in 1733, they found two of the largest islands, between Asia and the Aleutian group, entirely uninhabited, indicating that, although the trend was in the direction of Asia, communication with that continent had not yet been effected. The absence of any kind of sea-going craft between Asia and the Aleutian Islands, at the time of the Muscovite discoveries, convinced Bering and others that the Aleutian natives were merely moving westward from the American mainland.

The most convincing proof for Petroff was the character of the articles found in ancient Aleutian burial caves, and the structure of their huts, or igloos. These latter were built of whale-ribs, on the mountain sides of Unimak and Atka Islands, after the fashion of the Eskimos farther north. The Asiatic cast of features, observed in the Aleuts nowadays, could be easily explained by the constant intermixture of the Alaskans with the natives of Kamchatka, and other parts of Asia, after the advent of the Russians.

But these assertions off Petroff will not stand the test of more recent ethnological investigations. Not merely has it been found that there is a strong affinity of language and tradition between the Aleut and the Asiatic coast tribes, but there are authors daring enough to name the people who are responsible for the Aleuts of today.

The presence of shell-mounds in the Aleutian Islands, similar to those seen in other parts of this continent, and even in Japan, leads Winchell and Dall to believe that the Aleuts are descendants of a Mongoloid race that once covered this continent, and whose shell-heaps, or middens, are to be found along the Atlantic coast from Nova Scotia down to Florida and even to Brazil. Other heaps are found on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, up the river valleys through nearly all the southern States and along the shore of the Pacific Ocean, all the way from Alaska to Central America. "That this race is of Asiatic origin," says De Roo, "can hardly be doubted by one who observes that their monuments are to be found at both the abutments of the gigantic natural bridge which spans the North Pacific Ocean from Alaska to Japan, with the Kurile, the Commander's, and the Aleutian Archipelago as its piers. Several

shell-heaps are to be seen near Tokio, Japan, which are of great antiquity." The Aleuts whom I met in Unalaska are undoubtedly Mongoloid, if externals, count for anything.

The best authority on the life and customs of the Aleuts is the Russian priest, Venimianof, a missionary who labored, from 1824 until 1838, in the Aleutian chain, as well as among the Thlinkets, at Sitka, in Southeastern Alaska. This clever man, who afterwards became Primate of the whole Russian Church, wrote copiously about those two Alaskan tribes, and left behind him a long account of their traditions and beliefs, which he showed to be a medley of superstitions and shamanism.

When the Russian traders began to arrive, in 1750, the Aleut population may have been eight thousand. But this number was soon reduced in numbers, owing to the cruelty of the newcomers—a cruelty which, according to the testimony of the Russian chroniclers themselves, was nothing short of barbarous. Venimianof tells us that the Russians slaughtered at least three thousand, and perhaps five thousand; another author, Sarychef, calls this a moderate estimate. Those early traders placed no value on the life

of an Aleut; the most revolting cruelties being indulged in as late as 1770 and 1790. Solovief shot down Aleuts simply for the sport he found in it, tying them together and using them as targets to test the penetrating power of his ammunition. Milder methods were adopted with the advent of Shelikof and the Russian-American Fur Company, who replaced the original traders in 1790, and whose officials seem to have been kindly enough in their dealings with the natives.

According to Venimianof, the character of the Aleuts was mild, and their manners were hospitable. The navigator, Captain Cook, had rendered a similar verdict about them, half a century before. His biographer, Kippis, affirms that they were the most peaceable and inoffensive people Cook ever met with. Their form of government was patriarchal. Every village consisted always of relatives, and formed only one family, wherein the oldest and wisest had authority over all, and looked after the common welfare. In some villages, however, the chiefship was hereditary. If no direct descendant was available, the new chief was chosen from the tribe for his bravery in protecting the territory, and for his skill in hunting.

When the Russians assumed control, they modified somewhat this state of things. They gave special powers to two or three chiefs who were chosen by the Aleuts themselves, and who acted as intermediaries between the traders and their people. Under the company's management the Aleut tribes, except for the services they were forced to render, and for which they received but scant remuneration, seem to have enjoyed complete liberty. This, in a general way, appears to have been the state of the tribe when Alaska was transferred to the United States, in 1867.

The second group is the Western Athabaskan, or Tinneh, which must be classed among the North American Indians, whose domain extended from the Arctic to Mexico. The Alaskan Tinnehs are spread over the interior of the territory on both sides of the Yukon River, and as far west as Koserefsky. A belt of Eskimos hems them in on the north, west and south, completely separating them from the ocean, except at one point near Cook's Inlet, on the North Pacific.

That the Tinnehs are offshoots of the Athabaskan race, and that they pushed their way westward into Alaska, in past ages, there is no reason to doubt. Comparative philologists are

confirming a fact that was only surmised a very few years ago. Father Jetté, a Canadian Jesuit missionary living among those natives, in a recent letter to the writer, says: "That the Alaskan Ten'as are Athabaskan is clear to me from the fact that their language is closely connected with that of the Luchueux, Rabbit-Skins, Yellow-Knives, etc., all of whom are undoubtedly Athabaskan. I had a fresh evidence of this when Bishop Pascal visited us and gave us specimens of his Montagnais. He had quite a few roots common with mine; and, as you know, his vicariate is at the very centre of the Athabaskan tribes. But these Athabaskans are divided up into at least four distinct groups, namely, the Montagnais, the Luchueux, the Peaux-de-lievre, so-named by the French Canadian voyageurs, and the fourth, that I would call the Alaskan Ten'a, or Tinneh." These proofs of American origin coming from such an authority, are convincing. Father Jetté has spent several years analysing the roots and structure of the Tinneh tongue.

Petroff divides the Alaskan Tinneh group into nine different tribes, or families—a division based entirely on linguistic differences. But this author

wrote nearly twenty years ago, when data were necessarily scarce. Traffic on the Yukon and its tributaries has been brisk in recent years, and has brought the natives into more frequent communication with whitemen. The work of exploration and evangelization is going on actively among them; so that other Tinneh dialects may yet be found.

Before the advent of the white traders and their questionable civilization, the savage instincts of the Tinnehs were well developed; and occasions only were needed for a display of their cruelty.

Several incidents connected with the tribe are matters of Alaskan history. In 1836, two Russians, Glazunof and Malakof, in the employ of the Russian American Fur Company, reached Nulato, six hundred miles from the mouth of the Yukon. They built a station there for purposes of trade and exploration, but the savage Tinnehs soon destroyed it. Seven years later, Lieutenant Zagoskin, of the Russian Navy, and five assistants, also on a tour of exploration and discovery, went one hundred miles above Nulato; but the hostility of those natives obliged them to turn back.

The cruellest example of the savage character of the Tinnehs was the Nulato massacre which took place in 1851. In that year, Lieutenant Barnard, a member of Captain Collinson's party, in search of Sir John Franklin, went up the Yukon to Nulato, to verify rumors that white-men had been seen by the Koyokuk branch of the group far in the interior. Barnard desired an interview with Larione, the chief, and sent a messenger for him. This dignitary, who was, at that moment, celebrating a feast twenty-five miles from Nulato, either misunderstood the import of the summons, or else he had a too lofty idea of his own importance. He took offence at the message of the officer, called a council of war, deliberated, and then proceeded to action.

Larione's first deed was to assassinate the messenger, and the Russian interpreter. He then started for the native village, which contained about a hundred people, killed them all except a few women and children. The Russian trading post, which was only half a mile from Nulato, was next visited. The assassins did away with Deriabin, the commander; then broke into the quarters where they found Lieutenant Barnard

reading. A notorious shaman, or sorcerer, stabbed the Englishman in the abdomen and mortally wounded him. This unfortunate officer was buried at Nulato, a few yards from the stockade. A simple monument to his memory was raised by a fellow-officer of H. M. S. *Enterprise*, to which Barnard was attached. Retaliation came three years later, when the Russians cooly massacred every native in the settlement at Andreafsky, further down the Yukon. But the memory of the tragic ending of the British officer is still preserved at Nulato. Barnard's grave is marked by a simple monument bearing an elegant classical inscription in Latin from the pen of Father Angiolini, the well-known Jesuit epigraphist.

The passing of the years has wrought a deep change in the character and habits of the Tinnehs. Frequent intercourse with the white traders and miners—to which must be added missionary influences—have had a humanizing effect on them. They still live by fishing and hunting, and, owing to their expert knowledge of the Yukon, a few of them are employed as pilots on the boats, plying up and down that mighty river.

The Thlinkets are the third largest group of the Alaskan natives. They inhabit the islands and coast of Southeastern Alaska, and are divided into twelve families, or "khoans," each known by its family emblem, or totem. From their first intercourse with whitemen, they were known as a warlike race, treacherous, avaricious (*), ungrateful for services rendered, jealous of their privileges, and masters in the art of mystifying their enemies. An imaginary insult was often sufficient to set them on the warpath. They gave the Russians a great deal of trouble during the entire period of occupation. Captain Vancouver records the details of several lively encounters with them during his exploration of the Archipelago ; and even since the transfer of the territory to the United States, armed force has had more than once to subdue them.

Of the twelve khoans, the Hydahs, living on Prince of Wales Island, are by far the most

(*) Archbishop Seaghers, writing, in 1886, gives an instance of the avarice of the Chilcoot khoan : — "Not only did they charge us thirteen dollars a hundred pounds for carrying our supplies, but they made us pay for guiding us, for ferrying us across the rivers, for looking after our safety and that of our packs. And they then exacted what they called "a present," for having faithfully stuck to their bargain."

interesting from an ethnological point of view. They are classed as Thlinkets, though the Hydahs themselves deny this connection, and assert their superiority over the other families. There is some foundation for their assertion. They appear to be the remnants of a race of superior attainments, who were on their way to a relatively advanced civilization when the Russians reached their shores in the eighteenth century. They were slave-holders, and had a well-defined form of government and police. They were house-builders, stone and wood-carvers, their work in these lines being marvelled at by La Perouse, Cook, and other early travellers. Vancouver found the Southeastern natives living in organized villages with narrow streets, many of the houses clinging to the hillsides after the fashion of the present day cliff-dwellers of King Island, in Bering Strait. Contact with the Spanish, Russian and American fur-traders taught those natives the value of furs and fish, and made them proficient in the use of firearms.

The Thlinkets—the Hydah branch especially—are the Alaskans whose haunts are visited yearly by thousands of tourists, and who get all the notoriety that magazine literature can give them.

The myths attached to their origin, the story of the descent of their families, one from the bear, another from the whale, a third from the raven, and so on, and the elaborate totem system resulting therefrom, with its far-reaching clan restrictions, have given those natives a special place among aboriginal peoples.

The totem system originated with the Hydahs, but in the course of time it was extended to the other families of the Thlinklet group. It is a well-defined code of tribal morality which would not discredit civilized nations. A great deal has been written about the system, with its well-known adjuncts, the carved tree-trunks, or totem poles, all of which may be reduced to a few lines. I learned much about these matters in some conversations I had with the Rev. Hall Young, the superintendent of the Presbyterian missions among the Thlinkets, and with Frederic Frobisé, a former curator of the museum at Sitka.

There were three classes of carved poles. The first was the *historical* pole, which told the story of the remarkable events in the career of a chief or other warrior. The second was the *death* pole, which recorded the fact and manner of death of members of the khoan. The third

was the totem, or *pedigree* pole, the most important of the three, which gave the line of descent of the mother's family. So that an adept could tell by merely looking at the totem pole to what khoan the owner belonged. Children were always known by the totem of the mother.

The combinations of figures, birds, and other living things, distorted beyond recognition and graven on the poles still standing, are no longer intelligible. They were, most of them, even when the system was in vogue, intelligible only to the persons interested; sometimes not even to them, I was told, as much depended on the idiosyncrasies of the totem carvers. But those lofty monuments were objects of pride and veneration among the Thlinkets in the past; even at the present time, they are looked on as one of the most curious form of heraldry in the world. The pride of ancestry was strong among the Thlinkets; the native who had blue blood running in his veins wanted to let people know it, just like any modern aristocrat—and he made very great sacrifices to secure a monument. The possession of an elaborate totem pole cost many an otter-skin; it was, in fact, a luxury that only the wealthy could afford. As long as the system was

in fashion, carving was a lucrative trade among the Hydahs. Possessed of all the instincts of a modern drummer, the native carvers, went from village to village, soliciting employment, and securing it by their appeals to the sentiment of pride in their clients. It is quite possible that they made their way even to the Sandwich Islands; for there were real totem poles standing there at the end of the eighteenth century. Vancouver states that the residence of Tamaahmaah, King of Hawaii, was decorated with many statues, or idols, rudely carved out of great tree-trunks, to represent the human form.

The encroachments of modern methods, however, and intercourse with the white races, have made the Thlinkets more or less oblivious of the past. One of the results of missionary influence among them, is that the totem system is dying out, and that even the family totem is falling into disuse. Dr. Young informed me that the system was the cause of much injustice and suffering in the tribes, owing to the unequal and unjust distribution of property. At the death of a mother, her relatives took possession of the family belongings, and thus, very often, left her children in poverty.

There are many old poles still standing in some of the villages of Southeastern Alaska; but they are mere relics of aboriginal glory, and fair marks for the snap-shots of passing kodaks.

In point of importance and numbers, the Eskimos, or Innuit, group, stands out in relief. There may be fifteen or twenty thousand of them, scattered along the greater part of the coast line of Alaska, and forming a rim around the north, west and south of the Tinnehs. Like that of the Aleuts and Thlinkets, the origin of the Eskimos is enshrouded in mystery, which, it is hoped, will be cleared up some day. "Their descent, whether Asiatic or American, has been discussed by ethnologists, but the only tangible result of such discussion," says Petroff, "has been the establishment of the general belief that they are of American origin." This author suggests that the Eskimos, after having reached the Frozen Ocean from their original habitations in the interior of the American continent, spread along the Arctic eastward to Greenland, and then westward and southward, following the Bering coast. The Alaskan Eskimos are of the same family as those of Greenland. A former member of the Peary expedition, now a missionary agent

THE AUTHOR'S CABIN, SUMMER VIEW

THE CABIN, AFTER A BLIZZARD

at Cape Prince of Wales, came to Nome while I was there, and told us in a lecture that from his knowledge of the language of the Greenlanders, he was able to make out some of the words of the natives along the Bering Strait.

The Alaskan Eskimos are divided into eighteen families, a division based, as in the other three groups, on locality and linguistic differences. The mode of life of all these families is very much the same. Their tribal organization is simple. They have no chiefs, but there is always some one in each village who, for one reason or another, is more prominent than the rest, and who is the recognized spokesman.

Before the coming of the miners to Nome, in 1898, the lives of the Eskimos along the Bering coast were simple and industrious; they spent their time in looking for the wherewithal to live, and in making war on fur, fish and feather. But in the past few years those who have their settlements near mining camps, have acquired a taste for tea, milk, butter, vegetables, and canned goods in general, which may be easily procured from shop-keepers. The Eskimos are beginning to depend on these sources for their subsistence, a circumstance which does not augur well for

their future; for the easy acquisition of food will inevitably render them indolent and shiftless. An Eskimo told me in plain English, one day, that it was very much easier to open a can of Chicago corned beef than to mend his net and go a-fishing.

In the inland settlements of Seward Peninsula the natives still live by fishing and hunting; and an interesting sight it always was to me, during my stay at Council, to see a score of Eskimos floating down the Neukluk and out to the Bering ice-floes. On these expeditions, some travel in kaiaks, others in oomiaks. The former is a little skinboat, graceful in form and so light that a man can easily sling it over his shoulder. It is about fifteen feet long and solidly built of delicate wooden ribs held together by means of walrus thongs. The whole frame work is then covered over with seal-skin, except an oval hole, or hatch, in the middle, large enough to allow a native to sit down at the bottom. The native and his kaiak form one thing; they complete each other. In rainy weather, or when the surf is high, the Eskimo dons his "kamleika," a waterproof garment made of the entrails of the seal. When he enters his kaiak and ad-

justs the lower edge of the garment over the hatch, he fears neither wetting nor sinking, it matters little how choppy the waves are. Seated comfortably after this fashion, and armed with a double-bladed paddle, he starts out in his quest of walrus and seal.

Those animals are two of Nature's precious gifts to the Eskimo, gifts that he puts to the very best use. Walrus-hide furnishes him a covering for his skinboats; walrus ivory, material for his spears and curios. With the skin of the hair seal, he manufactures his mukluks, or footwear, while seal meat and seal oil are his dainty dishes. No morsel will tempt an Eskimo unless it has been dipped in seal oil. It is this fact that explains the respectable distance which is always kept between him and the whitemen whose olfactory nerves are in any way developed.

The use of fire-arms has been general for the past twenty-five years among the Eskimos of the Bering coast; although I never saw a kaiak that had not also its bone spear lying thereon ready for action. At Golovin Bay, I watched a young native in his little skin-boat, waiting for several hours for a seal to show the tip of his nose. That was all he needed to see; and if

Charley Ikliuk did not get his prey that day, it was altogether the seal's fault, the natives being very skilful with their weapons.

The oomiaks are large open boats made of walrus-hide, and built as wide and as long as the old north-boats, or *bonnes*, of the Canadian lumbermen. I had occasion to closely examine dozens of oomiaks, both at Nome and on Kotzebue Sound. Not a nail or a bit of iron was to be seen anywhere in them. Wooden pegs, bone wedges, sinews and thongs of walrus-hide took the place of iron, and served their purpose well. Those skin-boats are strongly built, and ride superbly on the waves. I saw their strength tested when I was on the *Saidie*, passing down through the Bering Strait. Captain Richmers, who is a friend of the natives, overtook an oomiak filled with Eskimos in the open Arctic. He offered to carry them down to Port Clarence, an offer which was very readily accepted. The oomiak glided in quickly beside the vessel, when men, women and children climbed on the deck with the agility of monkeys. The sailors then attached a hawser to the large skin-boat and hauled it aboard; it resisted the strain as if it were made of iron.

The Eskimos, who live on the Bering coast, and along the river banks of Seward Peninsula, flit from place to place a great deal in summer. They are engaged in catching and drying fish, which they store away in little huts, or caches, perched on posts. During those short months, they live in tents, and cook their food in small sheet-iron stoves which the miners sell them. In winter, they retire to their igloos, warm rooms built half underground, with doors so low that one has to bend down on all fours to get in. Along the coast, the igloos are solidly made of driftwood and last for years, several of them being now used as road-houses by the whites. I had the unenviable privilege of spending two days and two nights in one, during a blizzard, at Topkuk, on my first winter trip to Council.

In the populous settlements, besides the igloos which are the private dwellings, there is always a large underground building, called a *cachime*—a sort of Eskimo town-hall—where the male portion of the settlement work during the day making mukluks and parkehs, carving ivory curios or weaving baskets, and where the whole community spends the long winter evenings singing and dancing.

The Eskimos at Nome and the outlying camps belong to the Mahlamute branch of the group, the most westerly of all American tribes. A single glance at those natives suffices to disabuse one of the absurd school-book tales about stunted Eskimos. They are men of splendid physique, few of then measuring less than five feet and a half, and many of them being fully six feet high. The women are also well built, but the habit the mothers have of carrying their children on their backs gives them a bend that is not graceful.

The number of natives around Nome is increased every summer by the arrival of the cliff-dwellers from King Island and the natives of the Diomedes Islands, off the Siberian coast. The first care of those strangers when they touch land is to haul their oomiaks out of reach of the surf, raise them so that they may rest on one side, and then prop them up with the paddles. This manœuvre gives them a secure shelter from rain and coast gales. The natives pitch their tents and immediately set to work a-carving ivory. The children, always plentiful, start to build mud-pies in the sand and to play with their fur-clad dolls, utterly oblivious of men and things, until the kodak fiend appears. The sight of an "Eastman"

scatters them like chickens before a hawk; one can rarely capture a young Eskimo by time exposure.

When they are not at work in their tents on the beach, the Mahlamutes and their visitors, filthy in dress and bare-headed, walk around in groups of four or five, peering into shop windows and chewing gum. The costumes of those strangers startle one who sees them for the first time. Men and women dress alike, the women however, being more stylish, in the decoration of their parkehs. It does not take white people long to get accustomed to their curiosities in dress; but during one's first day in Nome, it is a novelty to see women going along the streets decked out in Bryan O'Lynn's furbelows. The men shave the crown of the head, leaving only a rim of hair around the skull. Whether this is to keep them cool or for some other reason, I am unable to say. They carry about with them ivory curios of all descriptions, the result of their industry. Some of these are crudely made, while others are really artistic in design and execution.

It is remarkable how those primitive Eskimo artists, who certainly never had lessons in technique, can observe perspective, foreshortening

and shading so well. One native in Nome, Happy Jack, draws portraits true to life on ivory tusks; and—a rare qualification in an artist—he has the commercial instinct developed in a marked degree. When this Eskimo asks you a hundred dollars for one of his productions, he really means it; and when once he has fixed his price, which is always high, it is useless to try to gain him over to more reasonable sentiments. He is perfectly honest, and will do all he promises, but he wants to be well paid for it. Unhappily, the Eskimos have had such sad experiences of the dishonesty of the whites that their primitive guilelessness has disappeared forever. They are now fully on the alert, and one can hardly blame them. An American tourist in Nome purchased from a native an ivory cribbage board, made out of a complete walrus tusk, beautifully carved. The price was twenty dollars, and the terms were "spot cash"—a shining gold piece. When the native tried to buy some provisions, later in the day, he was told that he had only a bit of polished brass in his hand. Another whiteman bought ivory curios from a native in Nome and gave him in payment several World's Fair medals. Dishonest acts like these, and a hundred

similar ones, are changing the character of the Eskimo, and turning his natural candor into suspicion. He is learning to know the difference between gold and brass, tin and silver; he now invariably bites a piece of money before he closes a transaction.

The better class of miners resent this treatment of the native; they have only words of praise and kindness for him. There are few hungry "mushers," lost on the coast, or in the interior of the peninsula. who have not, at some time or other in the past five years, experienced the hospitality of an Eskimo's igloo. We have yet to learn of a case, in which a miner was refused food or warmth by a native. And as the miners are a class of men, blessed with the bump of gratitude, they are not slow in giving expression to their feelings, and praising the Eskimo.

One of the white champions of the Eskimo lives at the old Swedish mission of Chinik, on Golovin Bay. His name is John Dexter, and he is probably the best known and most respected name in Northwestern Alaska. Originally from New England—Boston, I think—he has been for nearly a quarter of a century a fur-trader in the employ of the Alaskan Commercial Company.

This man has given away a couple of fortunes in his charity to the natives. His wife is a clever Eskimo woman, whom he educated, and who has proved herself worthy of her white husband. At the moment of writing, she is in San Francisco, superintending the training of her daughter who has remarkable artistic talent.

Gifted with a retentive memory, Dexter himself, like all the old-timers in Alaska, is steeped in native lore. He is a well-read man and a born story-teller, and miners are always flocking to his hospitable home at Chinik to hear him relate his experiences when alone on floating ice-cakes or when lost in blizzards on the tundra. If he could write a story as well as he can tell one, this interesting Alaskan would open up an unexplored field in literature. I had him all to myself for a couple of days once, during a summer journey up the Fish and Neukluk Rivers, and I secured from him a great deal of information about his own exciting career. When in the interest of historic truth, I asked him, as delicately as possible, where fiction ended and fact began, he frankly declared he could hardly tell me. Though not professing any religion in particular, this whole-hearted man has always been

a friend of our missionaries. He has kept the pleasantest memories of many of the Jesuits of the Yukon, of Father Tosi in particular, whom he accompanied on his memorable trip north to Kotzebue Sound. He gave me many interesting facts about the strenuousness of this hardy old missionary, who was then over sixty years old.

But men like John Dexter are the exception. The influence of the white population is sensibly modifying the character of the Eskimos, and for the worse, at least in Seward Peninsula. Those poor people have constantly before their eyes the pernicious examples of the degradation of many of the mining camps and the unscrupulousness of the white hangers-on. It was long ago evident to them that gold is the god of most of the Alaskan miners.

During my stay at Nome, a Swedish miner, working on Anvil Creek, struck something hard while digging. He was about to cast it aside with his shovel, but its weight excited his curiosity. He stooped down and picked up a solid gold nugget, nearly as large as a loaf of bread, the largest ever found in Alaska. It was brought into Nome, where its weight was recorded, one hundred and eighty-two ounces, and its value,

three thousand two hundred dollars. It was then put on exhibition in the office of the Pioneer Mining Company; and streams of visitors began to adore the idol on its pedestal. The great gold nugget was the topic of conversation for a week. Congratulations were showered on the lucky Swede who found it, and little sympathy was wasted on the man who had sold the claim for a song. The poor untutored Eskimos standing by, looked with astonishment at all this excitement over a lump of yellow metal. Can you wonder if they ask, "Has white man gone crazy?"

It is idle to speculate on what the results would be if the Alaskan native ever came to see the possibilities that lie hidden in heaps of yellow gold dust. Meanwhile, the seeds of Christianity are being planted in these tribes. In the next chapter I shall say something about the work begun by the Jesuit missionaries, and the Sisters of St. Anne, whose heroism has become a by-word in Alaska.

CHAPTER XIV

Religion in Alaska—Missionary Work and Its Results

BEFORE the arrival of the Russians, no form of Christianity had found its way into those desolate regions of the north. Shamanism, or sorcery, with all its abominations, had cast its dark shadow over the Eskimos, and as far as is known, over the other three tribes as well. The natives have a firm belief in the existence of good and evil spirits, and they practise incantations to propitiate the one and ward off the other. However, the religion of the native Eskimo is a religion of fear rather than of love. Feeling that he has no reason to dread the good spirits, because they are good, all his attention is given to gain the favor of the evil ones. Sickness is ascribed to the direct action of evil spirits, and the patients are treated after recipes of which the shamans alone have the secret. One instance of their methods of cure will suffice. After singing and dancing around a sick Eskimo, a shaman applies his lips to the part of the patient's body where the pain is greatest. He then casts from his mouth a

thorn, or bug, or pebble, which had been put there for the purpose, and persuades the sick man that this was the cause of his illness.

The influence of these emissaries of Satan is still strong among the native population along the Bering coast. When the Sisters of Providence furnished their hospital at Nome, they set aside a ward in an adjoining building exclusively for the Eskimos. This was a necessary addition to their establishment, as no white patient would live in the same room with an Eskimo, and inhale the odors of seal oil that emanate from his body. Shortly after the building was opened the ward was filled with natives, several of them suffering from pneumonia, one being at the point of death. The surprise of the Sisters was great one early morning, when they entered the ward and found it empty. They learned later that a shaman had got in during the night and had threatened the inmates with the vengeance of the evil spirits if they did not quit the place; which they did promptly. However, the intercourse of the natives with the whites, and the utter contempt the miners show for the shaman, are making many of the Eskimos somewhat sceptical of his powers.

Among the Mahlamutes of Seward Peninsula, I saw very little of the effects of shamanism, but I know that those sorcerers provide children with charms of ivory or pieces of skin, curiously wrought, which are worn around the neck. I saw in a window at Nome, the stock in trade of a professional shaman who had given up his trade after his conversion to one of the sects. It was indeed a motley collection that this imp of darkness used in order to practise his sorcery, birds' wings, masks, walrus thongs, ivory and bone curios, forming a portion of his stock in trade.

The Eskimos' fear of death is remarkable ; a dead human body is to them an object of terror. Relatives and friends abandon a sick native for whom there is no hope of cure, or they sit stolidly by till death comes to relieve the patient's misery ; they then quit the igloo and return no more, leaving to other hands the care of the corpse till it is taken to its final destination.

A pathetic scene came under my notice on the shore of Kotzebue Sound. An Eskimo was dying of pneumonia at Keewalik ; I found him on a bearskin in his igloo and burning with

fever. His wife and four children were sitting beside him, silent and immoveable, and unable to help him. I administered some quinine secretly ; for I had been warned by the miners not to give him any medicine in presence of the relatives, as they might attribute his death to me, and then I should find myself in a "peck of trouble" with them. However, the native died a few hours later, and the family abandoned the igloo, leaving everything behind them. The grief of his little children, who appeared to realize vividly all they had lost, was one of the saddest sights I ever witnessed. Great tears rolled down their cheeks, and they sobbed as though their little hearts could break. Even the flinty old gold-hunters standing by were touched, and some of them had an unusual amount of moisture about the eyelids.

The miners constructed a rude coffin of boards and canvas. When the moment came to carry the body to its last resting-place, pallbearers of four different nationalities — a Portuguese, a Dane, an Italian, and an Austrian — stepped forward to do the work, giving us one of those touches of Nature that makes brothers of all mankind. The coffin was raised to its four posts,

CAPTAIN PATF, U. S. MAIL, AND THE AUTHOR ON THEIR WAY TO THE BERING COAST

six feet above the ground, and the dead man's hunting-knife and rifle were hung alongside. But it was a sad commentary on our white civilization to see the friends of the Eskimo breaking the trigger of the rifle before they hung it on the post. They knew by experience that the weapon would soon be stolen by white men, if it were worth anything.

The first attempt to Christianize the Alaskan tribes was made in 1794, when the Russian American Fur Company formally introduced the Orthodox Church. Shelikof, the organizer, had taken the preliminary steps, at Kadiak, some years before. In 1787, he had petitioned the Russian Synod to send missionnaries to convert the Aleuts, promising that his company would provide them with transportation, and support them in their new field. In a special ukase, dated June, 1793, the Empress Catherine II. ordered the Metropolite of Moscow to select the best material for such a mission, and in the following autumn, the Archimandrite Ivassof, with seven members of the Russian clergy and two laymen, left St. Petersburg for Okhotsk, whence they sailed for Kadiak. This large island was the headquarters of Shelikof, and from it the

monks spread out in different directions under the protection of the fur hunters. The Archimandrite Makar proceeded to Unalaska and began to baptize all the natives within sight. Another, Juvenal, performed the same function on the natives of Kadiak Island and along Cook's Inlet. This monk was murdered two years later for trying to put down polygamy. He appears to have been an energetic man, and did more to spread the Russian doctrines than the rest of his companions. The other members of the mission were less active, and confined their labors to the neighborhood of Kadiak. In 1797, the Archimandrite Ivassof was ordered to Irkutsk for promotion to the episcopacy. While returning to Alaska, he and two of his clergy were lost at sea. This catastrophe was a set-back to the Christianization of the Aleuts, and the work remained in abeyance until the arrival of Baranof, who asked for a priest for Sitka. In 1816, the monk Sobolof reached Southeastern Alaska, the first Russian-Greek missionary, apparently, who labored among the Thlinkets.

At the renewal of the charter of the company, the clause relative to missionary enterprise was insisted on. In 1823, Venimianof, the most dis-

tinguished of the Russian clergy in Alaska, appeared on the scene. He was instrumental in spreading Christianity over a vast extent of country, visiting not only the Aleutian Islands, but all the coast of the mainland from Bristol Bay to the Kuskokwim delta. Venimianof was a man of exceptional ability. He mastered the Aleut and Thlinket languages, translated portions of the New Testament, composed a cathechism and hymnal, and, as we mentioned in the previous chapter, began an exhaustive research into the traditions, beliefs and superstitions of the natives of the Aleutian group. When Alaska was detached from the episcopal see of Irkutsk, Venimianof was made Bishop of Sitka, assuming the name of Innocentius. Here he devoted himself with great zeal to the conversion of the Thlinkets. He established a seminary for the training of natives and half-breeds for the Russian priesthood, an institution which was maintained for many years. Venimianof was subsequently transferred to Russia, and died at Moscow as Primate of the Orthodox Church. (*)

(*) It may be well to note here that the Russian Church is an offshoot of the Greek (Scnismatic) Church which first broke away from Catholic unity in the ninth century; and

After a century of labor, and a lavish expendidure, the Russian Church had apparently made but little impression on the natives of Alaska. In 1860, the Holy Synod, the highest ecclesiastical authority in the empire, put the number of Christians at eleven thousand. This is considered a gross exaggeration. But for all that, the Russian Church once had palmy days in Alaska, and there was a time, when her combined military and religious functions were carried out with almost imperial splendor. As late as twenty years ago, a United States official thus described the Russian cathedral at Sitka: "It is almost cruciform in character, and in a good state of preservation. The interior bears evidence of wealth and taste. There are several rare and valuable paintings on the walls. One beautiful represesentation of the Madonna peculiarly attracted my eye. The decorations of the altar are rich and the carvings are creditable. Valuable silver ornaments exist, and the church service is

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which, after many attempts had been made to heal the breach, with but temporary success, definitely renounced her allegiance to the Pope, in the fifteenth century. The Catholic Church looks upon both mother and daughter as heretical and schismatical, but admits the validity of their orders and sacraments.

expensive. The sacerdotal vestments are of heavy cloth of the finest texture and tastefully embroidered in gold. When Sitka was in the height of her glory, the sanctuary of the cathedral was thronged by officers of the army and the navy, government officials, and some of Russia's proudest nobles; but now a general gloom pervades the church property as well as the whole place."

Shortly after the colony was purchased by the United States, the episcopal see was transferred from Sitka to San Francisco, and the halcyon days of the Russian Church in Alaska were gone forever. There are still a few Russian priests at work here and there, along the coast of the North Pacific, on the Bering Sea, and on the Yukon River, but their influence is inappreciable, except in those small missions where their schools are kept up. The imperial government, I was told, allots eighty thousand dollars a year for the maintenance of the clergy in Alaska and for the preservation of the Russian schools. This latter fact has always been a sore point with the Americans, who resent the efforts which the Russians continue to make, to prevent the natives from learning any other language but their own.

Why the Russians do this, is not far to seek, for the Russian tongue has kept the natives strongly attached to the religion which their forefathers embraced.

Several of the Protestant sects, notably the Moravians, Presbyterians, Swedish Evangelical, Congregational and Episcopal, are at work in various parts of Alaska. Of these, the Presbyterians, who landed in that country in 1878, have been the most successful. The present governor of Alaska, John B. Brady, was a Presbyterian missionary for years. And Sheldon Jackson, another Presbyterian missionary, is the superintendent of education for the whole territory.

The Roman Catholic Church began her labors in a quiet way in 1872. Francis Mercier, chief agent of the Alaska Commercial Company in those regions, alarmed at the constantly threatening dispositions of the natives along the Yukon and the Tanana, suggested to his company that it should take steps to introduce Catholic missionaries among them. The success of the Church in other countries, and the humanising influence she exercises over savage tribes, were the motives that urged the agent to invite the Oblate Fathers to take up the work. In the

ESKIMO IN WATERPROOF "KAMLEIKA"

autumn of 1871, Bishop Clut, of the Athabasca-Mackenzie district, with two companions, Father Lecorre and an Indian interpreter named Silvain, crossed over the mountains and wintered at Fort Yukon. The following spring they sailed down the river to Neuklukayet, where they met a large number of natives from the Tanana and Koyokuk districts. They then continued their journey down the Yukon, instructing both Tinneh and Eskimo adults, and baptizing their children. Notwithstanding the opposition shown by the shamans and the Russianized natives, the Oblates considered the prospects so bright that they decided to establish stations on the Yukon.

After spending a year in reconnoitring, Bishop Clut turned homeward, leaving Father Lecorre in residence at St. Michael's, at the mouth of the river. The missionary remained then until 1874, when the news came to him that the spiritual jurisdiction of the Alaskan territory had been entrusted to the Bishop of Victoria. This prelate was the saintly Bishop Seaghers, who ultimately gave up his life in the work.

In July, 1877, with one companion, Father Mandart, he made a preliminary voyage to St. Michael's, and then advanced into the interior as

far as Nulato, where he determined on making a lengthened stay. During the long winter of 1877-78, the Bishop travelled a great deal up and down the Yukon River, and visited many of the native villages. He made three expeditions up the Koyokuk, undergoing, in the interval, privations of all kinds. When leaving Nulato for Victoria, he promised the Tinnehs that he would return the following year and establish missions among them. It was during his absence that his promotion to the See of Portland had been effected, a circumstance which prevented him from keeping his promise.

However, this first episcopal visit produced immediate results in other parts of the territory. In 1878, Father Altoff went to reside at Wrangell, in Southeastern Alaska, from which point he visited the whole Cassiar country and the coast, where the only white settlement was Sitka, the former Russian capital. He was transferred to Juneau, and saw its beginnings in 1885, and there he was joined by Father Heynen who was sent to aid him in his labors at Sitka. Those two zealous priests, who were the pioneers of the Church in the Alaskan Archipelago, lived in the utter isolation of primitive missionary life, preach-

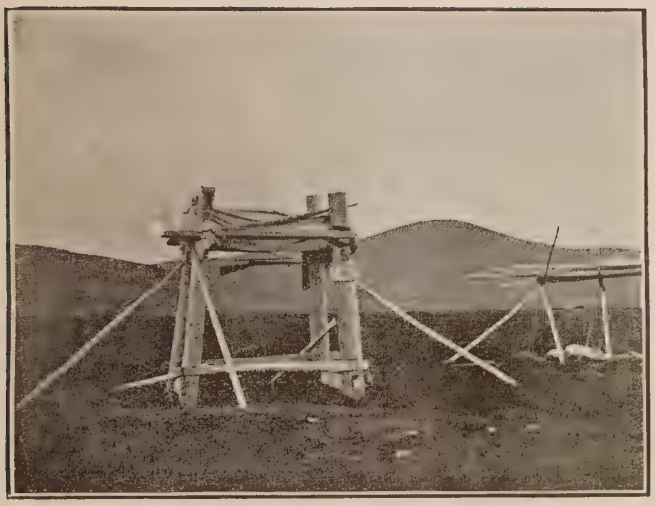
ing the Gospel to Thinklet and whiteman alike, until the decree issued by the Propaganda in 1886, raised Alaska to the dignity of a Prefecture Apostolic and handed it over to a religious order.

In 1883, Archbishop Seaghers went to Rome, secured his re-appointment to the See of Victoria, and resumed his long-delayed plans in favor of the Alaskan natives. He invited the Society of Jesus to share the work with him, and in the July, 1886, he started for the headquarters of the Yukon, accompanied by two Jesuits, Fathers Paschal Tosi and Aloysius Robaut, and a hired man named Fuller. The little band suffered many hardships, and underwent many dangers, on their way over the Chilcoot Pass and down those seething waters that were to witness so many catastrophes, twelve years later, when the Klondike discoveries startled the world.

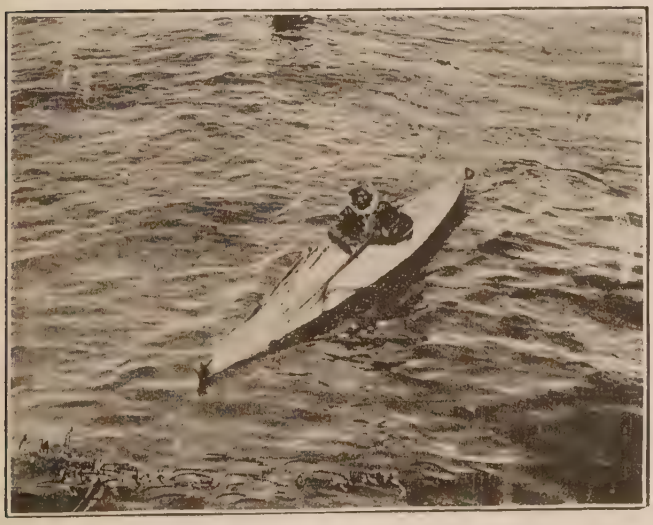
When they reached the mouth of the Stewart River, eighty or ninety miles south of the present city of Dawson, the Jesuits pitched camp for the winter, to work among the Thlinkets, while the prelate and the man Fuller proceeded on their way down to Yukon. Archbishop Seaghers was impatient to reach Nulato to keep the promise which he has made the Tinnehs, six years pre-

viously. The two travellers experienced many difficulties during the journey from masses of floating ice, and were well-nigh exhausted, when they reached Nulato, the end of their eleven hundred mile journey. On the way, the servant Fuller developed symptoms of insanity, growing morose, and, at times, acting with the greatest insolence towards the archbishop. The prelate decided to stay at Yessetlatoh, near the mouth of the Koyokuk, until the Yukon had frozen over, and he took up quarters in an abandoned fishing cabin. On the morning of November 25, Fuller roused the prelate from his sleep, and while the latter was sitting up, the wretch, in a fit of insanity, pointed a rifle at him and shot him through the heart. Death was instantaneous. The remains of the murdered archbishop were taken down the Yukon River to St. Michael's, whence, two years later, they were transferred to the crypt of the cathedral in Victoria, B. C. The murderer was sentenced to prison for a number of years, his insanity having saved him from the scaffold.

This tragedy opened the work in Northern Alaska. The Catholic mission among the natives of that ice-bound land was thus watered with



ESKIMO GRAVES ON THE ARCTIC COAST



ESKIMO NATIVE IN HIS KAIAK

the blood of him who must be considered its founder,—a fact that is the surest pledge of its future success.

At the breaking up of the ice in the spring of 1887, the Jesuit Fathers Tosi and Robaut, not finding the occasion favorable to begin their mission on the Upper Yukon, started to join Archbishop Seaghers. When they reached Nulato, they were shocked to learn of the deed that had been done in the preceding November.

The work in Northern Alaska now devolved entirely upon those two Jesuits, who, filled with the zeal of which the murdered archbishop had given them so illustrious an example, began their journeys westward along the Yukon and its tributaries. They travelled from village to village, and, with their limited knowledge of the language, they explained to the natives, as best they could, the reason of their advent among them. The settlements on the valley of the mighty river offered the most favorable ground for their missionary zeal; and while Father Tosi returned to the United States to give the details of the sad ending to Archbishop Seaghers' life, Father Robaut decided to carry out the prelate's intention, and he established a mission at Nulato,

among the Tinnehs. The following year, he accepted the invitation of the Eskimos, near Koserefsky, to go to live with them. Thus began the Holy Cross Mission, which has become the centre of the work of the Jesuits in the interior. This mission is located on the west bank of the Yukon, about four hundred miles from the Bering coast, on a level strip of land enclosed with mountains on the west and south. Several large log buildings form the dwelling places of the missionaries and their assistants. There are outbuildings, dormitories, and workshops where the young natives of both the Eskimo and Tinneh tribes are kept and formed to habits of industry under the direction of Jesuit lay-brothers, who teach them to work at gardening, carpentry and smithing of various kinds.

The native girls, gathered in from the villages along the Yukon River, are under the care of the Sisters of St. Anne. Those devoted women, whose mother-house is at Lachine, near Montreal, went to Alaska in 1888. They are the pioneer Sisters of the North, and have by their zeal and self-abnegation made Holy Cross Mission the most prominent place on the Yukon, west of Dawson. They have constantly in their care

seventy or eighty Eskimo and Tinneh girls, whom they train in the arts of cooking, knitting and sewing. They instruct them thoroughly in the Catholic faith, a task which they find to be pleasant and easy of accomplishment; for the native children, although possessing few external qualities, are endowed with quick minds and retentive memories. Their talent for music and their soft voices, cultivated under the direction of the Sisters, have more than once, in the past sixteen years, surprised the tourists and miners going up and down the Yukon.

The Sisters of St. Anne, who are doing so much for the Church in that distant land, deserve a page all to themselves in the annals of Alaska. Already one of their number, Sister Mary Angilbert, has gone to receive the reward of her generous self-sacrifice. She lies in the little cemetery on the hillside, under the shadow of the great cross that gives its name to the mission.

The well-known traveller, Harry deWindt, who visited Holy Cross Mission on his way to Siberia, in 1897, devoted a sympathetic page to it in his work, *Through Alaska to Bering Strait*. "The pleasantest memory," he wrote, "that I retain of the dreary journey from Circle City to St.

Michael's, is the Catholic Mission of the Holy Cross, at Koserefsky, which is prettily situated in a grassy valley formed by the low, undulating hills. The steamer remained here for a few hours which enabled me to visit the mission. The latter consists of several neat buildings, comprising a dwelling house for the Sisters, a priest's house, a pretty chapel, a school for the native children, and a vegetable garden..... Here too was the first and last flower garden that we came across in Alaska. It was pathetic to see the care that had been lavished on the flowers—poor things at best—but which infused a touch of warmth and color even into this lonely waste.....At one end of the garden was a statue of our Lady, enshrined in a tiny chapel of pine boughs, while a large white cross near the mission marked the resting place of a poor sister who had just died before our arrival. The climate of Koserefsky is very trying, and many deaths have already occured here, although the mission was founded only ten years ago. Before leaving, I visited the schools, models of neat cleanliness, where twenty or thirty children of both sexes were hard at work. The whole place wore an air of peace and homeliness, so different from the squalid settle-

ments up the river, that one might almost imagine himself in some quiet village of far-away France."

There are half a dozen Sisters of St. Anne in the Yukon missions. They are doing a noble work among the young Tinnehs and Eskimos, and emulating, in a different sphere and under different conditions, the Sisters of Providence whose labor among the miners of Seward Peninsula I mentioned in a previous chapter.

The work of the Jesuit missionaries among the natives of Northwestern Alaska now comprises two flourishing missions, Koserefsky and Nulato, on the Yukon, Akularak, in the delta, and a fourth on the Kuskokwim. Others are being established in the more populous settlements which are visited regularly in spite of the appalling distances and the rigors of the climate. Incredible are the hardships such men as the Jesuits Tosi, Treca, Robaut, René, Crimont, Jetté, Chivassa, Ragaru, Munroe, Judge, Barnum, Lucchesi, Lafortune, Camille, and a dozen others, have endured in the past few years, and are enduring still, to sow the seed of the Faith in the minds and hearts of the tribes along the Yukon and its branches.

The cold and the intense isolation of the Alaskan winters have no terrors for those brave men who are giving their lives to the work; nor do their personal sufferings or inconveniences count for aught when there are souls to be saved. It is admirable to read in their private letters—confidential missives not destined for the public eye—the note of resignation, coupled with a spirit of zeal for the glory of the Great Master, and their confidence in the providence of Him who feeds the sparrows and clothes the lilies. Still in their exile among the Alaskan tribes, they have consolations that are undreamt of by the world outside. The readiness of the native children to accept the Faith, and their genuine piety after their conversion, demonstrated in the missions already established, are rewards sufficient for men who have forsaken the comforts of civilization. Those missionaries look for no reward in this life; and the sacrifices they are making are the surest guarantee for the future of religion among the Alaskan natives.

It remains now to tell what the Church is doing for the white population in that distant land. Of the thousands who flock to Alaska every spring, a large percentage is Catholic. It was during

ESKIMO MAIDEN IN WINTER PARKEH

the rush of 1900 that the Church began to look after their spiritual interests. As early as the August of the previous year, Father René, S.J., the then Prefect Apostolic of Alaska, went to the Nome mining camp and promised to send spiritual help. A month later, Father Treca, a Jesuit missionary residing at the mouth of the Yukon, paid Nome a visit, said Mass for the miners, and gave them the other benefits of his ministry. The following winter he tried to make a second visit to the camp, but before the devoted missionary had reached Unaliklik, he nearly perished in a blizzard. His face and feet were severely frozen, and his life was despaired of for a long time afterwards.

In July, 1891, the first resident priest, Father Jacquet, S.J., was sent from California to Nome. He began the erection of a Church which was completed in the autumn. The structure is large and well-built, and has the distinction of being the most westerly church in the Western Hemisphere. The cross which tips the steeple is the highest point in Nome. It is lighted by electricity, and being visible at a distance of twenty miles, it serves as a beacon light for lost travellers inland, and for ships at sea. During the

summer time no such signal is needed, as daylight is continuous for several months. But as the autumn approaches, and the darkness becomes intense, it is a singularly picturesque and inspiring sight to see this brilliant cross standing out clear and distinct, apparently unsupported in the black sky. The Eskimos call it the "whiteman's star." During the long winter nights it serves as a rallying point, and has been the occasion of saving the life of many a miner, who, in trudging home to camp, had lost the trail on the tundra. So important is the role that this cross plays on the Bering coast, that the Nome aldermen decided, just before I left that town, to stand the expense of the lighting during the season of darkness.

Owing to his efforts in the first months of his ministry, the health of Father Jacquet became impaired, and he was succeeded by two of his brethren, Fathers Van der Pol and Camille. Those two priests suffered for a whole year the privations incident to pioneer missionary life, and worked heroically for the spiritual uplifting of the Alaskan miners. They were succeeded by Father Cataldo, who has been already mentioned, and the writer of these pages.

The Catholic priest's ministry in Nome and the outside camps differs little from that in other centres. But the appalling absorption of the miners in their work of fortune-hunting renders them more or less callous to the appeals that are made to them in the interests of their souls. Alaska is for them only a temporary halting place, where they intend to stay just long enough to fill their purses — and no longer. Other considerations, even spiritual, are secondary. Dozens of miners frankly acknowledge to you, when you approach them, that their religious convictions will not bear very close inspection, and their practice carries out this declaration to the letter. They themselves admit that this is the result of their education in the much vaunted public schools of the United States. One hears a good deal about the leakage the Church is suffering from in the neighboring Republic, and of the almost incredible numbers who have lapsed from the Faith. But I confess I was not prepared to meet such solid proofs of the fact as I did during my two years in Alaska. Nearly all are possessed by the demon of indifferentism. I met quite a number of staunch co-religionists in the mining centres which I visited,

and I feel that the rest of them have lying latent somewhere that Faith whose teachings they learned at their mother's knee. If they are not taken off suddenly, they will probably call the priest to their bedside when dying, but they are altogether too delicate about troubling him while they are in health. Of course, there are extenuating circumstances. Three-fourths of the Catholics in Northwestern Alaska are day laborers, and the mining season lasts less than five months out of the twelve. Mining employers require every moment of their workmen's time, night and day, Sunday and week-day. This is the universal excuse among our people for their apathy ; and this is really the best excuse that they can give. They are taken up so exclusively with their day's work that there is little means of reaching them ; it is precisely this fact that makes visits to mining camps so unsatisfactory. But the miners are big-hearted, and "the sky-pilot" is always a welcome guest among them. He is treated royally, and listened to respectfully. Protestants assist at Mass as well as Catholics; but there the programme ends. There is no time for any kind of instruction. Other interests are more pressing than the interests of

their souls ; and it is very likely that while the preacher is talking to them about the treasures which rust not, and which the moth cannot injure, they are thinking about their dump of "pay-dirt," and calculating the value of their next "clean-up."

These were my experiences both on Kotzebue Sound and at Council. Early in the summer of 1904, I made a second trip to the latter camp to carry out a project I had in view, that of building a small log church and house. After my visit there, the previous winter, the foundations had been dug ; and the promise of generous support urged me to complete the work begun as soon as possible. I had even hopes of entering the church before the beginning of winter. Friends in New York had sent me an organ and altar equipments ; but a church was needed in which to house them. Unfortunately, skilled labor cost ten dollars a day, and finishing lumber one hundred and twenty dollars a thousand feet ; so that the high prices made it prudent to "hasten slowly."

However, nothing could be gained by waiting; so I set to work to pull the wires. Council being seventy miles from the coast, the forest was thick

enough, and the trees large enough, for building purposes, I had only to take the means to cut them down and haul them into camp. Ten or fifteen brawny miners, among them Protestants as well as Catholics—even a Greek was of the number — shouldered their axes just before the terrific blizzards set in, and went to fell trees on the banks of the Neukluk, five miles from Council. It was like an echo from the far-off Canadian lumbering camps to hear the joyous shouting of the axe-men, as the lofty trees came crashing down. But even during the log-cutting we were not allowed to forget that we were in Alaska. While we were at dinner one day, a procession of Eskimos, drawn by reindeer, passed down beside us on their winter trail to the coast.

The next problem to be faced was that of getting the logs out of the forest. Several horses had been kindly offered to me, but owing to the abnormal depth of the snow, those animals were useless; so we had to harness up dog-teams, and, in a few days, the church logs were hauled out to the main trail on the Neukluk river. It was at that moment that the worst storm in the history of Council came, and forced us into what threatened to be an indefinite inactivity. The

SNAKE RIVER, NOME

ESKIMOS SELLING CURIOS, NOME

snow came down heavily and unceasingly; brisk winds drove it up, layer after layer, against our low cabins, covering some of them gradually like quicksand; others it covered completely, leaving nothing visible but the stove-pipes. During that strenuous season, we had little time to think about church building; we were all kept too busy digging ourselves out.

At the end of six weeks we had a respite, when the miners set to work again to haul, and hew, and build. The church was raised only to the eaves, but the dwelling annex was soon completed, and I entered my own home. It was there I spent the rest of the winter in literary solitude, the most delightful of prisons, putting together much of the matter which appears in the present volume. A few books I had secured the previous autumn, and private correspondence with the Yukon missionaries, taught me many things about Alaska, which I have endeavored to communicate to my readers, especially about the native tribes, and the efforts that are being made to given them the inestimable boon of the Christian Faith.

One strong impression remains with me, from my contact with the natives in Alaska, and that

is that there is a vast field for missionary zeal among the aboriginal population of that country, if men and means could be found to work there. The Alaskans are intelligent and willing to receive instruction. Unhappily, neither men nor means seem to present themselves as abundantly as the circumstances would demand. There are many souls to be reached in Alaska: souls not merely of the hundreds of miners who care not for, and seek not, the only true wealth, but souls of thousands of natives as well, who are hungering for the Words of Life, and there are none to utter them.

There are thousands of natives, not merely in Seward Peninsula, but in the rest of the territory, who have never heard any one speak to them of God, and who would become edifying Christians, as the work already done proves, if there were missionaries who would devote a few years of their lives to the work of their conversion. It is the will of the Master that men shall reach heaven through the ministry of their fellow-men; and yet in Alaska, with its five hundred and seventy-seven thousand square miles, there are less than twenty Jesuit missionaries at work. There is a field there for ten times the number.

Are there not many young men, in the colleges and seminaries of the United States and Canada, who are neglecting to listen to the Silent Voice calling them to the noble ministry of souls? And for this neglect, what answer shall they make to God on the Day of Judgment?

CHAPTER XV

Last Year on the Bering—Homeward Bound

THE first year of my sojourn in Alaska was at an end, and left behind it ineffaceable impressions of life in a mining camp. The approach of my second spring on the Bering coast was the signal for another period of feverish activity. The miners who had had the courage to remain with us in the north all winter, began to set probable dates for the arrival of the first steamer from Seattle. Under the piercing rays of the May sun, the mountains of snow, in and around Nome, began to melt and run down in formidable torrents to Bering Sea. By the end of the month we hoped to see a renewal of the bustle which had ceased in the preceding October. The surf at Nome would soon be lashing the beach again, and we should be able to saunter down and watch a dozen steamers, laden with miners and fortune-hunters, anchoring out in the offing. We were all sharing in the enthusiasm of an early break-up. The ice had left Bering Sea in front of Nome on May 30th, in 1900; in 1901, a steamer got in on June 4th; the following

AN ESKIMO IGLOO

ALASKAN TOTEM POLES

year, the roadstead was free on May 27th. These precedents gave us hope. But the weeks dragged on. June came, and still the ice fields stayed with us. The nights, which had now turned into days, only made the time seem longer. On June 3rd, a heavy fall of snow covered the ground.

An element of anxiety was soon added to the pathos of the situation, by the fact that Nome's larders were nearly empty. The supply of fresh meat had already given out, the imported eggs had grown stale, while the few potatoes and vegetables remaining in the camp were not fit to eat; so that the whole population was living on canned provisions and cold storage food of various kinds. One pessimist even prophesied that if the ships did not soon come in, we should all be reduced to live on rice and beans.

It was only on the 8th of June that the ice began to move out toward the Arctic. A novel sight it was, looking up and down the coast for thirty miles, to see a solid mass of ice, covering hundreds of square miles, slowly detaching itself from the land and moving out to sea. A couple of days later, a southerly wind brought a considerable portion of it back to shore again, but

broken up into innumerable pieces. Many large cakes floated about near the beach, but the main bulk of the Bering ice had met the Arctic current and was being forced slowly northward through the strait.

Meanwhile, the sun was registering 80° in the shade; the snow had left the hills; and flowers in countless numbers, and of every hue and color, were springing up all over the tundra. Nature was busy putting her final touches to their beauty, when, on the evening of the sixteenth, the first steamer came to us, followed, a few hours later, by two others, bringing us fresh food and fresh news, the latter perhaps the more welcome of the two, after our long eight months' seclusion from the outside world. A bunch of letters brought tidings from home and friends, tidings that were not all joyful.

The saddest news that came to me was that of the death of Mrs. James Sadlier, the venerable author, whose name had been to me a household word since my early boyhood, and whose gentle, motherly voice it had been my privilege to listen to so often in recent years. Mrs. Sadlier was the first writer of books I ever met—this was in my student days—and perhaps it is be-

cause she was the first, the impression of veneration I had for her, in the dignity of her authorship, had ever since remained with me. In her long career she did much for God, and for the Celtic race; even in Alaska, I met people who had read her books, and who were the better for it. It is sad to think that the pen which gave us "Confederate Chieftains," "Elinor Preston," "Willie Burke," and a dozen of others, and which inspired so many to high ideals, is thrown aside forever. But her works will live. With Mrs. Sadlier "words were things, and her ink, falling like dew upon her thoughts, will still make millions think," and only to make them love God the more. What a blessed legacy!

Other steamers carrying four thousand miners dropped anchor within a week. The transfer of thirty-five thousand tons of freight and mining supplies from the lighters to the beach, made Nome very active again; but it was only a repetition of what takes place every spring-time. It seemed, however, a rather brusque transition from the Rip Van Winkle state we had been in during the long winter.

The miners started for the inland creeks to renew the operations interrupted the preceding

autumn. Squads of men "mushed" over the tundra to Council, and to the Teller district. Others went directly north, to the newly-found placer-beds on the banks of the Kougarok and the Inmachuk, and began to dig for gold-dust. The season's work was in full swing during the ensuing four months. The old claims all through Seward Peninsula held their own in "colors" during the summer, and substantial returns rewarded the perseverance of the owners. Placer beds that showed any lessening in the value of their "clean-ups" were given over to the tender mercies of the hydraulic monitor. It would be too technical to describe here the hydraulic system of mining for gold. Suffice it to say that machinery has been invented which turns a stream of water against a mountain-side, tears it down, sends the gravel up through a metal pipe, and then deposits every grain of gold in the riffles of the sluice-box. This is a great labor-saving device; and when good water pressure is attainable, it is the only economic way of getting the metal out of what is known as low-grade ground.

River dredging was introduced into the Council district during the summer of 1903 by Alex-

ander de Soto, a promoter of mining in California and other parts of the continent. This master-miner, who is also a well-known surgeon of the Pacific coast, especially at Seattle, where he founded the Wayside Hospital, has had a rather interesting career. He is the son of a former Spanish minister of war, and a descendant of the famous explorer of the same name, was educated at San Quintin, near Barcelona, became a navy surgeon during the American civil war, then professor in the University at Upsala, in Sweden, and "life-medicus" to King Charles XV., with whom he travelled extensively, and from whom he received a title. He has for many years given his attention to mining in the two Americas.

The energy of this little Spaniard, who is now over sixty-five years of age, was well illustrated, during the past season, by the way he successfully brought across the Pacific, and up shallow Alaskan streams, a monster Hammond dredging-machine, in pieces numbered and ready to be put together. I followed with deep interest the construction of this admirable product of human skill, and saw it, day by day, assume shape and proportion. Every beam and wheel and bolt fitted as neatly as the wheelwork of a watch; and

when the great dredger was completed, its whole inner gearing and its action were controlled by levers in the hands of one man. It then began to dig gravel out of the bed of the Neukluk at the rate of three thousand cubic yards a day. The enterprise I learned later, ended in disaster—but the energy of the master-miner was not at fault. Object lessons like these, which one has before one everywhere in Seward Peninsula, examples of the herculean labors men will undertake for the sake of gold, are strong incentives to urge a missionary to work in higher spheres and for nobler purposes.

Another energetic character engaged in the peninsula is the California miner, Charles D. Lane, a name known in mining circles from Alaska to Mexico. He has the enviable distinction of being a millionaire, and, as president of the Wild Goose Mining Company, has several thousand men in his employ in Alaska. But that does not prevent him—an old man of nearly seventy—from "roughing it" in the gravel pit, and giving the tone to the company of which he is the organizer and recognized head. He built a narrow-gauge railroad from Nome to Anvil Mountain, and another from Council to his mines on Ophir creek.

ESKIMO GIRLS IN SUMMER COSTUME

These two Alaskan roads, the most northerly in America, were according to the official statistics of 1902, the most profitable in the whole United States. They are in operation every season till the cold weather closes down the mines.

Even master-miners cannot cope with nature. When the summer ends and the ice begins to come, hydraulic monitors are silent, the dredgers cease to turn, and the workmen lay down their shovels. Autumn there bears a complexion all its own; it is not the mellow autumn of other lands, with its golden grain and crimsoned forests, but a short season of melancholy days, with the north winds wailing through the spruce trees. There are no sere leaves to droop and fall in Seward Peninsula, no Indian summer to lead us gently down to harsher days. Summer ceases, and that is all; and then winter comes on rapidly.

Autumn is the season of formidable gales along the Bering coast. Every year the equinoctial storms do considerable damage, some years more than others. On a coast where there are no harbors for deep-sea vessels to put into, and no protection anywhere but on the lee side of Sledge Island, eighteen miles from Nome, it is evident that seamen who navigate in those parts must

know how to deal with sudden agitations of wind and wave.

The Nome people learned the lesson five years ago; the disastrous storms of the autumn of 1900 are still remembered there and spoken of with awe. The newly arrived mining population had built their mushroom town just high enough on the beach to escape the tides. Although warned by the Eskimos that they were not far enough away, like true Americans, they spurned the dangers they could not see; they thought they "knew it all." Soon the September winds began to agitate the Bering surf and to multiply the white-caps. Then the wind coming from the south freshened into a gale, and the miners anxiously watched the surf lashing the shore. But when with the increasing fury of the gale, huge waves rolled resistlessly landward and washed away the foundations of the houses and cabins on the beach, causing them to fall about the owners' heads, the miners admitted they were acquiring experience, and that it was not wise to ignore the counsels kindly proffered them by the natives.

In 1903, I had the privilege of witnessing the equinoctial storms at Nome. The damage to

property was small, compared with what happened in 1900, as the owners had profited by their experiences of the previous two years, and had built their houses out of the reach of the surf. But it was an awe-inspiring sight to see the mountainous waves of water rolling in to shore, one after the other, with monotonous regularity. There are no rocks along the Nome beach, nothing but the tundra sloping gradually down to the sea. A sand bar, parallel with the beach, lies below the surface, four hundred yards off. When the incoming waves met with this obstacle they turned over in magnificent curves that would have sent Ruskin into ecstasies, and then gathering fresh strength, hurled themselves against the beach sands with the roar of a park of artillery. Night and day, you could hear the monotonous heaving of a million tons of ocean water, and their dismal roaring, as they spent their fury on the sands. At such times as these, large vessels in the roadstead weigh anchor and put out to sea; the smaller ones take refuge in Snake River. No craft could live in such storms, and they do not try to. Last autumn, several steamers were unable to discharge their cargoes in the surf, and carried them back to Seattle.

Nature in Alaska has treats for every mood, even in those dark autumn days. After gazing with almost savage joy on the war of the elements and the awful turmoil of the Bering waves, one need but turn one's eyes upward to be enraptured at the sight of the great silver bow of the Northern Lights dancing in the polar sky. While one is gazing in admiration, great waving shafts of silvery light spring in quick succession from mountain-top to zenith, as if chasing one another in play amid the wilderness of the stars. And then it is the unrivalled brilliancy of the stars themselves — nowhere so beautiful as in Alaska — that attracts one's attention. In the long, solitary autumn nights, one never tires of looking at the Arctic sky and its wonderful transformations; and during the exhilaration of such moments, one cannot help asking oneself how it is that thousands of men will spend the best years of their lives in arduous toil, bent almost double, in order to dig out of the bowels of the earth the metal which has been the source of so much evil and so much unhappiness, when they need but raise their eyes to see flashing and scintillating in the infinite meadows of heaven, grains of gold more

THE CLIFF-DWELLERS ON KING ISLAND,
BERING STRAIT

THE MAHLAMUTES,
THE MOST WESTERLY TRIBE IN AMERICA

precious and more beautiful by far than were ever found in the sands of Nome. How narrow men's hearts seem at such moments, and how puny their interests!

And yet it is not Nature and her sublime manifestations that form the most interesting features of life in an Alaskan mining camp, but rather the people one meets and the way in which they live. The greed for gold brings thousands, every season, to this land of ice and snow; a year spent among them is worth a century of experience to any one who wishes to profit by it. Those thousands come from all parts of the world, and from all classes of society. Few of them are models, ethically speaking, but they soon learn to become good miners, and adapt themselves quickly to their surroundings. The hardships and disappointments, which are inevitably the lot of nine-tenths of them, only accentuate their determination to get gold. In Nome or in Council, when you meet a man in slicker and gum-boots, trudging home after ten hours' shovelling into a sluice-box, you cannot tell whether he is the scion of a belted knight or a child of humbler origin. In Alaska, men are not all what they seem, nor are

they prone to talk about themselves. They live alone, mindful that it is no man's business who they are, or whence they come, as long as they obey the mining laws, and do not "jump" their neighbor's claim. But this intensifies their solitude; a crowd is no longer company where there is neither sympathy nor love.

One of the prettiest valleys ever designed by Nature lies just in the rear of Council. When you stand on the neighboring hillside, a green forest of spruce, split in two by a rippling stream, lies hundreds of feet below you. In summer, activity reigns in the Melsing valley; dozens of tents are strung along on either bank, and mining goes merrily on throughout the season. In winter, the scene changes. The stream is turned into a thread of solid ice, while the forest bends to the ground under its weight of snow. It is a pleasant walk up this valley in the early afternoon, and I covered the well-beaten trail many a time in the last winter I spent there. One evening, I rapped at a cabin door, and was more than surprised to meet a young commercial traveller I had often seen, years before, on the Canadian Pacific, east of Winnipeg.

"How do you do, Mr.....?

"Excuse me, Father, that is not my Alaskan name."

The young man had no reason for changing his name in Alaska; it was only a whim of his. But his life since I had last met him, ten years before, had been one series of adventures. He had seen service in Cuba; had spent several months in a Key West hospital; had joined the Washington State volunteers and fought in the Philippines. Since then he had wandered through Japan and China, and then returned to settle in Southern Arizona. The gold fever took him to the Nome beach in 1900, and then from Nome to Council, in the hope of "striking it rich." There he stayed till the autumn exodus of 1903, when he came to tell me, one day, that he was on his way to South Africa. This is but one specimen of the men we meet. His log cabin is now occupied by others, and other miners are on his claim, all oblivious of the erratic youth who spent two years looking in vain for a "pay-streak."

Unfortunately, ill-success is the lot of most miners. For one who makes a fortune in Alaska, there are a hundred who leave it in poverty.

Some have been in the peninsula since gold was discovered, in 1898, and they are still at work with the pick and shovel. Apparently, the luckiest class of men who operate in those regions are the Swedes. They are noted for their persevering activity, and for their success as prospectors. The most promising discoveries have been made by hardy Swedes, who, when asked the secret of their success, simply answer: "We yust keep at it, zinkin' holes." That is really their secret. They keep on digging here and there along the edges of creeks and ravines, and on the hillsides, and they invariably strike auriferous gravel. If we examine the records of the various mining districts, we shall find that Swedes are in the majority as original locators of claims.

The other nationalities are not less ambitious; but they have the American humorist's antipathy to working between meals; and while the blond-haired Swedes are out prospecting among the hills, the others are at home discussing their prospects. There are a great many French Canadians in the various camps, hard-working miners and "mushers," who are just as ready to-day to start out on a thousand-mile trip up the

Yukon, or the Kobuk, as their ancestors, the *coureurs des bois*, were to cross the continent, in the eighteenth century, for the great fur companies.

There is a fair proportion of English, Scotch, Irish and German at work in the Alaska mines; of the four, the Irish are the most numerous. They are nearly all old miners from Montana or California, or even from Australia. There were in Council last year, four brothers, the Kellihers, from the shores of Killarney, all stalwart six-footers; and all four, miners. Early in 1902, one was still in Kerry; another, in Coolgardie, in Western Australia; a third in the Klondike, and the fourth in Council. They had not been together for a dozen years; and it was a peculiarly warm welcome those sons of an Irish mother had for each other when they met in that boreal land, in the spring of 1903. There was one cloud, however, between them and happiness: the old home in Kerry had lost a mother since they last met; and the great salt tears that filled the eyes of those homeless Celts, at the intensity of their reminiscent grief, were pearl drops too warm and too sincere to be chilled by Arctic cold. One of the four, who had all but

perished of heat and thirst in Australia, had once escaped drowning in a wreck near Cape Romanoff, who had been nearly asphyxiated in an old mine on the Yukon, and who, with myself, was lost for several hours in a blizzard last winter, is now in Ireland, buying the old homestead, a proceeding rendered possible by the recent British legislation.

Another fact whch life in Alaska brings home forcibly to one, is the fewness of our real needs in this world. The superfluities of life are eliminated from an Alaskan miners' cabin. There is nothing wasted, nothing thrown away. Simplicity, a virtue akin to greatness, is here recognized and practised in all its fulness. The Standard Oil company's tin cases are turned into water pails; tin cans of all shapes and sizes replace expensive crockery; a Yukon sheet-iron stove distributes heat and cooks food as well as the costliest ranges; cheese-cotton, tastily applied to the walls, hides incongruities as well as elaborate tapestry. The cabin itself is prettily situated, on the brow of a hill, or under the shadow of a mountain, thus denoting a miner's love of the picturesque. Given this power of adapting oneself to circumstances, there is as much happiness and

good cheer to be found in an Alaskan log cabin as there is in a brown-stone mansion.

There are miners living happily in Alaska, with their families, who left palatial homes behind them. Only the necessities of life are indulged in, while gold-dust is accumulating. But the cheerful face that is ever present, and the cheerful smile that brightens it still further, clearly show that happiness is not the exclusive appanage of ease and comfortable surroundings. A career of this kind, led for several years in Alaska, must surely have an influence on the lives and habits of rich miners when they return to the outside world. This is a consummation devoutly to be wished ; for reckon, if you can, the useless expenditure of money that is continually going on. A few years' residence in a miner's cabin would suffice to convince a man that his real needs are few, and that there are nobler uses for wealth than that of gratifying one's appetites, or decorating drawing-rooms with barbaric splendor.

Some of the miners I met in Alaska were well-educated men, graduates of various American colleges and universities, and members of the learned professions, all ardent lovers of fresh

air and out-door life, who were in that gold country, simply to get rich quickly. Such men usually meet with disappointment, for by the time they arrive, the rich claims are all in the hands of others.

It is only fair to say, however, that they do not lose courage on that account, and that they are not afraid of hard work. From their point of view, the greatest drawback to life in Alaska is the isolation of the long winter, and the absence of intellectual food. The small supply of books and magazines is soon exhausted; and unless the educated miner can carve out a solitude for himself and call it peace, he must find the time long and the winter dark, indeed. There is a small library in the Arctic Brotherhood hall in Council, where, among the good standard authors, there is the inevitable collection of translations of Dumas and of other authors of doubtful tendencies. In Nome, there were a couple of small libraries kept open last winter under Catholic and Congregational auspices.

Shortly before I left, the camp was threatened with a calamity in the form of an uncontrolled public library. Mr. Carnegie was to be asked to contribute one of his free libraries, where, as in

MINERS FLOCKING INTO NOME IN AUTUMN

LEAVING NOME FOR THE "OUTSIDE" — HOMEWARD BOUND

his other institutions outside, all kinds of books were to be flung to the miners for an eight months' intellectual debauch, in the interests of enlightenment ! The project was temporarily abandoned, but it may be taken up again.

And the gross inconsistency of it all ! In Nome, the apparition of contagious disease is like a bolt from the blue. Health officers are always on the alert, and ready to swoop down on the tiniest microbe. The mere rumor that small-pox had come to us, on one of the Seattle steamers, put all Nome in a flurry. The authorities, ignoring the feelings and sentiments of friends and relatives, sent vessel and passengers into quarantine for a couple of weeks behind Sledge Island. Such were the precautions taken to preserve our miserable bodies, which sooner or later must become food for the worms. And yet Nome is quite likely to ask the Pittsburg millionaire to set up, on the Bering coast, a public library, where half-educated, but receptive, miners, and citizens generally, would be at liberty to fill their minds with the deadly germs of irreligion, false philosophy and error of all kinds! If men's bodies must be protected by stringent health laws, why not their souls as well? Surely it

were better for even miners to be freed from such an intellectual pest-house; and rather than risk their eternal interests, they might better spend their winter months revelling in solitary contemplative thought—the play of the soul—which, a recent writer tells us, is the highest occupation of man,

The miners in the smaller camps spend the long winter months each after his own fashion. The frivolous, of course, always find a way to kill time; there are the dance-halls and bar-rooms, unhappily too numerous in that part of the world. The wiseacres busy themselves with the thermometer during the cold spells, and compare notes as to the temperatures of former years; or even, aspiring to the dignity of weather prophets, predict the probable date when the streams will be free of ice. Others—the homesick element—worry the postmaster about the departure and the arrival of the last mails of the season. Meanwhile the months slip quietly away ; the sun shines stronger; spring arrives.

My second winter in Council passed slowly and monotonously enough; but when the spring came, I was rewarded for my close isolation, by a sight that I shall long remember, an Alaskan "break-

up." The Neukluk River, which flowed beneath my window, had been frozen since the preceding October. The ice grew thicker as the winter advanced and the weather became colder. In front of Council, it had frozen to the bottom, a dangerous trick of Nature, which might have proved a costly one; for the residents of the camp, in order to be ready in the case of fire, were obliged to cut half a dozen of holes through the ice before they finally found running water. Their other efforts landed them on the river bed, after they had gone down eight or ten feet. This was the ordinary condition of the Neukluk during the winter. When the headwaters began to seek an outlet, they were forced to flow on the surface. Those different overflows, freezing in their turn, added several more feet to the ice already sufficiently thick. It was this mass, over a hundred miles long, that had to move down to Bering Sea before communication could be renewed with the ocean.

The first inkling we had in Council of the impending break-up, was the bubbling up of a stream that had worn its way up from the bottom, and formed an opening in the ice just in front of the camp. Under the strong rays of

the spring sun, the opening grew wider and wider, until a good-sized stream began to cover the ice. Suddenly one day, a sound, like a cannon shot at close range, startled the sleepy camp. A long diagonal crack rent the ice from shore to shore, indicating that the mass had become detached from the bottom. But there were sixty miles of it between us and the coast; and millions of tons had to move out into Bering Sea before the Neukluk would be clear. A week later the ice in Melsing Creek, close to Council, came rushing down into the Neukluk, jamming the river, just below the camp, and raising the level of the water by six or eight feet. The whole mass was now floating, and while looking for an outlet, it was crushing everything in its path. Meanwhile, the days were slipping by. The current of the river was eating into the ice, while the sun was doing its share of the work so well, that the torrents of melted snow rushed down from the tundra and weakened the ice's hold on the banks.

At last, the looked-for crisis came. Early one June morning, the whole field of ice began to move. Then followed, right under our eyes, a scene terrific to witness. Great cakes of ice rent

asunder, twisted and turned, and surged forward with irresistible force, grinding to pieces everything they found in their way. Some obstacle or other at the bottom of the river would stay their onward course for a moment, and the huge cakes would stand on end, half out of the water struggling with each other, like Titans in despair, only to fall down helplessly on their smaller neighbors. The din was deafening, as the masses began to pile up one on top of another. The rushing water, damned back would rise rapidly, hurl itself against the opposing masses, and force them out of position, when the crushing and crashing would begin again, until the stream beyond was covered with the debris of the struggle. Slowly the ice moved down with the current, but it was only at the end of a fortnight that the river was clear and ready for traffic.

These annual break-ups, and their continual inroads on the river banks, softened by the sun, explain the constant changing that is going on in the courses of the rivers and streams of Seward Peninsula. Huge ice-cakes eat away the banks and form sand-bars here and there, which grow quickly with the new accumulations of soil, until they reach the surface. In a few summers,

a stream changes its course, and the miners are left to guess where the original gold-bearing channel lay.

This was the last Alaskan scene I had the privilege of witnessing. The April mail had brought me a letter recalling me to Canada; so, immediately after the "break-up," I started down the river on my way to Nome, there to take steamer for Seattle.

I was so fortunate as to secure a passage on the *Roanoke*, the vessel in which I had made the voyage to Alaska, two years before. I went on board, in the last days of July; and, one evening, when the shadows were deepening, the good ship weighed anchor and quietly sailed away. As we steamed southward, Nome gradually disappeared in the waves.

The last object on which my eyes rested was the lofty cross of the Catholic church which remained visible long after the rest of the town had sunk below the horizon. As the same cross had been for me a sign of hope, two years before, when I saw it for the first time, so, now that I was quitting the land forever, it was a plea for resignation, a reminder that whithersoever we go in this vale of sin and sorrow, the cross is al-

ways in evidence. Before closing this brief narrative, however, I feel bound to say that I found the burdens and hardships of missionary life in Alaska far lighter than I had anticipated; and that, of my two years' sojourn on the Bering coast, there remain with me none but the happiest recollections.

THE END

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